Heritage Connect: the past will never be a puzzle again

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The website itself was funded through the Townscape Heritage Initiative by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the City of Lincoln Council.

Heritage Connect Lincoln – the first website of its kind in the UK - cumulates over 17 years of work bringing together colossal amounts of information about the city's rich character. Available on smart phones as well as desktop computers, the website reaches into many aspects of Lincoln life. The site displays the results of the Lincoln Townscape Assessment, which describes the character of Lincoln, and reflects almost £1 million of investment in the city's heritage in a partnership with the City of Lincoln Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage.

Easy to use for local people and visitors, the website divides the city into 108 different 'character areas', showing detailed information about each place using maps, photos, descriptions and videos. As well as finding out about their own neighbourhoods, people have the chance to add to the site, giving their memories or comments on particular areas and uploading their own pictures.

Emma Sayer, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, said: "At the Heritage Lottery Fund, we look to support innovative ways of getting more people involved in their heritage. Heritage Connect Lincoln will offer both local people and visitors a new way of exploring Lincoln's history and learning about how the city has developed over time. Through the creation of this new resource we have the potential to fire the imagination of future generations to discover the fascinating history that surrounds them."

Adam Partington, Townscape Character Projects Manager at the City of Lincoln Council, has managed the project and helped to build the website itself. He said: "Heritage Connect is a website that connects people with places. It gives them an understanding of how a place has developed into its current character over time, and why it functions the way it does today. A simple example might be to explain we still call central parts of the upper city the Bailgate. It's because the whole area was once within the 'bailey' of a motte and bailey castle, built by the Normans.

"This website is about Lincoln's entire character, but it's not about individual monuments or buildings – it's about all of the places that make up Lincoln. There are traces of the past everywhere in the city and if you know where and how to look, you can understand the reasons why a place looks and feels the way it does today."

The Heritage Connect website is available on smart phones, as well as on desktop computers. It uses GPS technology, locating the user in a specific character area of the city, letting them know what is in the surrounding area.

Web development company A Recipe For Success built the site. Director, Jeff Hume, said: "Heritage Connect has been designed to embrace the mobile internet and offers an optimised experience for smart phone users. The website uses W3C Geolocation to suggest points of interest that are close to your current location, such as monuments and character areas. It is unique in that it uses open standards such as GeoJSON and Google Maps for storing, delivering and presenting geospatial information."

Eighteen character areas of the city have **Sense of Place** videos on the site, which give people a broad understanding of the historical development of an area, focussing on the things to look out for when trying to read the past in the present. They encourage people to be 'place detectives', discovering and experiencing the character of a place. Three areas – Steep Hill, High Street and Bailgate – also have point-to-point Heritage Trails, which unite to form one journey through Lincoln's past.

Information on each character area includes:

- Interactive maps of monuments, archaeological research areas, views and ecological areas
- Written statement giving an overview and information on the historical development, urban form, condition, use, views into and out of the area, relationship to surrounding areas
- People's views and memories
- Maps and photos, including historic maps and maps of the urban characteristics
- Similar information is also available for the city as a whole

Notes to editors

Heritage Connect was born from the Lincoln Townscape Assessment (LTA), a project that defined the character of the whole city of Lincoln. It is a gateway for a series of heritage projects and an ecological project, which have been conducted in Lincoln since 1993.

The website itself was funded through the Townscape Heritage Initiative by the City of Lincoln Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. However, the huge amount of information held within Heritage Connect has been developed in a series of partnership heritage projects in Lincoln between the City of Lincoln Council and English Heritage. The website was designed and built by A Recipe for Success and videos were developed by Dragoman Sound Guides in partnership with the City of Lincoln Council.

The website is managed by the City of Lincoln Council.