

Proposed improvements to Market Place, King's Lynn

King’s Lynn has been a merchant town for more than eight centuries and this vital part of its history forms the cornerstone of a heritage-led economic revival.

Ptolemy Dean, architect, author and presenter of BBC2’s *Restoration* series, has been making a film about the Norfolk town’s historic streets and marketplace that are the focus of a Townscape Heritage Initiative supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the local authority, King’s Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.

The film, being made with media students from the College of West Anglia, will become a promotional tool for the project that will rejuvenate the heart of what Ptolemy Dean has described as 'a historically important, lovely town.'

The regeneration centres on the St Margaret’s Conservation Area where no fewer than 92 buildings are listed, seven of them Grade I, 15 Grade II* and the remainder Grade II. Owners of historic buildings will now be able to bid for grants to make appropriate restorations and repairs so as to bring them back into productive use, some as business or retail premises, others as residences, while enhancing the physical appearance of the townscape.

Alongside this work a second HLF grant will help tell Stories of Lynn. Centred on the town hall complex, with buildings spanning the 15th to 18th centuries, the project will improve public access to the borough’s comprehensive archives that date from the 13th century. A new exhibition will be developed bringing to life the stories of the people who created the town and port.

A further aspect of both projects will be opportunities for volunteer and community involvement. The Townscape Heritage work will provide training for young people studying crafts and trades to learn about traditional and specialist restoration techniques using authentic materials.

Townscape Heritage schemes help to reverse the decline of our best-loved historic townscapes. Local, regional and national organisations work together to repair buildings in conservation areas and bring them back to life. Since it was created in 1994 HLF has invested £243million in more than 280 projects throughout the UK. In the East of England region in addition to the Kings Lynn scheme there have been Townscape Heritage projects in Lowestoft, Cromer, Great Yarmouth, Bedford and Wisbech.