

News Release

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LDDC: THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND BUILDING CONSERVATION

In response to the London Docklands Development Corporation's (LDDC) rigorous campaign to refurbish and conserve listed buildings currently under threat from neglect or dilapidation in London Docklands, owners of such buildings are being pressed to repair them.

A special fund is being established to back up the service of repairs notices by which the LDDC can compel the owners of 'buildings at risk' to refurbish and re-use their properties.

Andrew Dick, Conservation Officer at the LDDC emphasised: "The LDDC's commitment to fulfilling its regeneration remit of bringing obsolete historic buildings back into effective use will now be greatly enhanced."

Seventy one vacant and derelict listed buildings, dating from 1654 - 1905, are being given urgent attention by the LDDC.

Since the establishment of the LDDC in 1981, emphasis has been placed on securing the refurbishment and re-use of neglected historic buildings in London Docklands. Successful conservation in Rotherhithe, Bermondsey, Wapping and Limehouse, are testimony to the LDDC's commitment to the project.

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Delcia Keate, English Heritage Buildings at Risk Officer, said of the LDDC's initiative to conservation: "It is very welcome to see that the LDDC are taking such a positive approach in dealing with the problem of empty and neglected historic buildings. In particular English Heritage are pleased to see the LDDC's increased use of planning powers, to oblige owners to repair their properties."

She added: "English Heritage is encouraging local authorities to make fuller use of their powers as part of a national initiative for Buildings at Risk. It is therefore most encouraging that the LDDC is seen to be taking an increasing active and successful role in this, both for listed and unlisted buildings in conservation areas."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- * London Docklands Urban Development area is 8.5 sq miles, stretching South of the River Thames from London Bridge City to Greenland Dock in Surrey Docks, and North of the River from Tower Bridge to Beckton in the Royal Docks.
- * A report by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England was issued on 29 January 1991. 'Buildings at Risk in Greater London'.

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- * The report found a total of 945 threatened buildings, vacant and partially occupied London-wide, of which 71 are in the London Docklands Urban Development area.
- * Buildings at Risk in London Docklands include churches, houses, schools, warehouses, pumping stations, public houses, bridges, river stairs and a river lock.
- * Examples of 'Buildings at Risk' in London Docklands

Church of St Matthias, Poplar

The oldest building in Poplar. It is one of only three churches built in England during the Commonwealth. Erected between 1652-54 it became the private chapel of the East India Company in 1656. In 1867 the building was used as the parish church. After it became redundant in 1976 it suffered extensive vandalism. It is owned by the London Diocese of the Church of England. The LDDC and English Heritage are mid-way through a £1/2 million programme of repairs. Alternative uses for the restored building are being investigated by the LDDC.

St Pauls Presbyterian Church, Isle of Dogs

Built in 1859 to the designs of T.E. Knightly to serve the needs of the Scottish ironworkers brought to work on the Great Eastern at the nearby Napier Yard. It is owned by Davy Monk Corporation. Vacant and in need of extensive remedial works, there are plans to convert this building into a local arts centre.

Lusk's and Lower Oliver's Wharf, Wapping

Part of a range of listed historic warehouses fronting onto Wapping Wall and the River Thames. This one which dates from 1860 is of impressive appearance with its giant arcade like elevations. It has been vacant and deteriorating for a number of years. Recently acquired by Caledonian Properties.

Isle House, Isle of Dogs

The former Blackwall dockmaster's house to the West India Docks. Erected in 1824 to the designs of John Rennie, the younger. It is owned by the Port of London Authority and has been unoccupied for 12 years.

- * Photographs attached