

Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy

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Appendix 2: Case Study 2 The Creative Quarter and Folkestone Townscape Heritage Initiative

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Case Study 2: The Creative Quarter and Folkestone Townscape Heritage Initiative

Introduction

The Creative Quarter is an area of Folkestone that has been developed by the Creative Foundation in order to regenerate Folkestone through creative activity. The Creative Foundation was established in 2002 as an independent visionary arts charity and is dedicated to the transformation of Folkestone into a better place to live, work, visit and study. The Foundation works in partnership with regional agencies, local authorities, higher education institutions and public/private bodies that include the Arts Council England, the District Council, Kent County Council and the Roger de Haan Charitable Trust. Since 2002, the Creative Foundation has established the Creative Quarter as a cultural hub and raised the profile of Folkestone as a major arts and entertainment destination.

The Creative Foundation also works in partnership with the Folkestone Townscape Heritage Initiative (FTHI) which began in 2012 following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid for funding to improve the built historic environment of Character Area 4 in Folkestone. The FTHI is a partnership between Kent County Council, the District Council and the Creative Foundation and works to improve the townscape through the repair, conservation and reinstatement of buildings and architectural features where possible in addition to the enhancement of the surrounding public space.

The area was originally chosen for development and regeneration due to the architectural and historical potential that was retained across Character Area 4. It was felt that a vibrant and thriving community could be established here through creative activity and expression in order to create a cultural hub and unique sense of place. A number of the buildings had declined into a poor state through abandonment, and extensive restoration work has been required to breathe new life into these uninhabited buildings and the surrounding area. The regeneration works have subsequently resulted in the reuse and reopening of a number of buildings that are now used for residential, leisure and business purposes. A number of important historical features that make valuable contributions to the local character have also been retained and incorporated into the regeneration work in a positive way.

This case study is intended to demonstrate positive heritage regeneration and the impacts that it can have on revitalising an area as well as the overall sense of place and local character. Positive heritage regeneration can also have wider impacts on economic, communal and mental wellbeing by making an area a better place to live as well as work, study and visit. In the case of the Creative Quarter and FTHI, the areas tourism and leisure offering has also been greatly enhanced and it has now been recognised nationally as well as internationally as a leading example in positive regeneration and creative activity.

Study Area Description

Folkestone's Character Area 4 is part of the overall Folkestone Conservation Area. Due to the size of the Conservation Area and the wide variety of character areas that it incorporates, it was decided by the District Council to use a phased approach to a

Conservation Area Appraisal so that the appropriate focus could be afforded to each distinct area. The boundary of Character Area 4 primarily covers the Folkestone Old Town. Its northwest boundary is created by the rear properties of Tontine Street and then stops where Harbour Way meets Tram Road. It then runs east along the clifftop above the Road of Remembrance and around the Albion Villas before heading back north towards Foord Road and along Foord Road South to Tontine Street. The area takes in a variety of buildings, architectural features and heritage assets that make it of special architectural and historical interest. The Creative Quarter, which is located within this area, primarily consists of the Old High Street and Tontine Street. Together these initiatives have created a vibrant community and enhanced public space that is a particularly important asset for Folkestone Town.

Previously the Old Town was very much at the heart of Folkestone but fell into decline when the town centre was established further north away from the seafront area during the twentieth century where it is located today. The Old Town has retained much of its architectural charm as well as its historic character that is now of special interest. It still follows its medieval street layout which is an interesting contrast to the planned nineteenth century layout of Folkestone West. The epicentre appears to have been where the Old High Street meets Bayle Street, and the streets are typically densely laid out and narrow. The topography of the area is also particularly hilly which again is very different to the flat and spacious Folkestone West. There is an emphasis across Character Area 4 on the individuality of buildings and the cobbled streets of the Old High Street and Bayle give it a village-like quality. In keeping with this unique character, the shopfronts are also characterised by independent businesses rather than large chains that can be found in the new town centre. This mixture of architectural styles and heritage assets has resulted in the designation of a number of the buildings in this area as Listed Buildings. Many others that are not designated are also of great local interest and valued for their architectural and heritage significance.

Historical background of the development of Folkestone

Folkestone has a long history and has expanded over many centuries eventually developing into a fashionable seaside resort that boasts grand houses, hotels and facilities. At its height, Folkestone was known as the “gem of the south coast” and had even become a favoured location for Royalty and the rich and famous. The town then faced difficulties during the latter half of the twentieth century when the British seaside holiday industry declined in favour of cheap foreign package holidays in addition to the opening of the Channel Tunnel and the loss of ferry services from Folkestone Harbour. Folkestone entered a period of decline which greatly affected the seafront area and Old Town, leaving many buildings abandoned and becoming derelict. This has now led to the extensive regeneration work by the Creative Foundation and FTHI and consequently the creation of the Creative Quarter. Future developments are also planned for the seafront area as well as work that has already been done to the Folkestone Harbour Arm, and it is intended that each of these regenerated areas will link into one another and create a diverse and rich new environment.

Although there were earlier settlers at Folkestone such as the Romans at East Wear Bay, the origins of Folkestone probably begin in 630 AD with the founding of possibly the first nunnery in the country by Eanswythe, daughter of King Ethelbert. Whilst the

nunnery did not last for long and remains no longer survive, it was an important religious establishment that is closely linked to the earliest English conversions to Christianity following the arrival of Augustine in Kent in 597 AD. After Eanswythe's death in 640 AD, she was canonised and her bones preserved as holy relics that are now believed to reside in the current St Mary and St Eanswythe parish church at Folkestone.

By the eleventh century, the Domesday survey indicates that the manor of Folkestone was a large and wealthy estate. In 1313 it was then granted a charter of incorporation and became a limb of the neighbouring Cinque Port at Dover. By the sixteenth century the population was around 500 though aspirations to expand further were quashed when plans to build a formal stone harbour at Folkestone were not realised. Despite some cross channel trade and smuggling activity, Folkestone remained largely subservient to Dover. Moving into the seventeenth and then eighteenth century, Folkestone continued to maintain fishing and stone quarrying industries, however it was during the nineteenth century that the town's fortunes began to greatly improve.

The arrival of the railway in 1843 and the establishment of the direct rail link onto the Folkestone Harbour for ferry services to the continent in 1849 greatly enhanced Folkestone's popularity and prominence within Kent. A formal harbour had been constructed between 1807 and 1820, and for a time Folkestone was the more popular cross channel port than even Dover. Holiday-makers, day-trippers and pleasure seekers were attracted to the area by its cross channel services and fashionable seaside resort. The town grew rapidly as a high status Victorian and Edwardian resort complete with facilities such as theatres, bathing machines, a pier and promenade. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Folkestone was at its height and even became a favoured haunt for Royalty such as King Edward VII. Unfortunately by the later twentieth century Folkestone entered a period of decline mainly due to the introduction of cheap foreign package holidays and the opening of the Channel Tunnel. However, the town has maintained a high proportion of its historic architecture and buildings unlike other seaside towns elsewhere in Kent which have seen extensive redevelopment.

The growth of the town primarily during the nineteenth century is still evident today in its layout and surviving buildings, many of which are now Listed or of special local interest. These include attractive collections of large stucco villas and features along the Leas such as the Coastal Park and promenade. The Old Town has retained its medieval layout as well as a number of its nineteenth century buildings that are now of particular architectural interest. Overall the town has kept much of its historic identity which has contributed to a distinctive and unique local character. This has been a particularly important component of the regeneration work by the Creative Foundation and FTHI that has enhanced and positively revitalised this area through its heritage and unique local character.

The Creative Foundation

As has already been mentioned, the Creative Foundation is an independent visionary arts charity that was established in 2002 and is dedicated to the regeneration of Folkestone through creative activity. The Foundation works closely with its partners and the people of Folkestone to transform the town into a better

place to live, work, visit and study. It has continued to grow and now looks after five key projects as well as other events and activities that are embedded in their regeneration work of Folkestone. These five key projects are:

1. The Creative Quarter
2. Folkestone Quarterhouse
3. Folkestone Triennial
4. Folkestone Book Festival
5. Folkestone Artworks

The Quarterhouse, which is a venue for music, theatre, dance and comedy has been built within the Creative Quarter and also hosts the Folkestone Book Festival. It is an important part of the Creative Foundations work that is dedicated to the regeneration of Folkestone through creative activity and is located at the bottom of the Old High Street close to the harbour. The Folkestone Book Festival has been running annually in Folkestone since 1980 though it had previously been a small event that was held mostly at the Metropole Art Gallery until 2001 when it began to rapidly expand under the leadership of the Creative Foundation and contacts at Saga Magazine. By 2005 the involvement of local people was being encouraged that resulted in the creation of the Friends of the Book Festival who continue to run events, newsletters and other activities as well as fundraising for the sponsorship of new authors. Sponsorship of the event by Saga ended in 2006 and by 2009 the festival had found its permanent home at the Quarterhouse and continues to flourish under the auspices of the Creative Foundation. Now known as the Folkestone Book Festival, it includes a number of events and activities such as themed days, talks and creative writing workshops.

The Folkestone Triennial is the flagship project of the Creative Foundation and takes place once every 3 years, the first of which was held in 2008. Again it demonstrates the Foundations beliefs in the power of creativity to transform people, places and communities which in turn creates opportunities for healthier and more vibrant places to live, work, study and visit. The Folkestone Triennial invites artists to engage with the local historic built environment and to exhibit newly commissioned works within public spaces around Folkestone. Around 20 major artworks are exhibited at each Triennial and up to 10 of these are kept as permanent installations. The event has quickly established itself as a significant event in the international as well as national cultural calendar and continues to gain momentum. It goes beyond being solely an arts programme and aims to change the character of the place in which it occurs. These exhibitions then create a unique sense of place as well as new ways of thinking about the local area and community.

Folkestone Artworks is the collection of artwork installations commissioned as part of the Folkestone Triennial that are kept as permanent additions to the townscape. The “gallery without walls” currently contains 27 works by a variety of acclaimed artists and can be enjoyed throughout Folkestone free of charge all year round. The artists include Tracey Emin, Mark Wallinger, Richard Wilson, Cornelia Parker, Richard Wentworth, Nathan Coley, Hamish Fulton, Adam Chodzko, Cristina Iglesias and Paloma Varga Weisz. The next Folkestone Triennial event is due this year (2017) and so more works will soon be added to this unique collection.

The Creative Quarter

The Old Town has been transformed into the Creative Quarter which is now home to a number of creative industries, businesses and individuals as well as education facilities that include the postgraduate faculty for the University of Creative Arts, East Kent College Folkestone Campus and the Folkestone Adult Education Centre. The townscape is a mixture of restored historic buildings as well as contemporary designer buildings and is supported by a vibrant creative community. To date around 90 buildings have been restored within the Creative Quarter and 300 jobs have been created.

The Creative Foundation facilitates the Creative Quarter by promoting it both nationally and locally to enable the local community to flourish. A number of events and activities are provided throughout the year that not only promotes the local businesses and economy, but also creates valuable opportunities for local people as well as visitors to engage in creative activity and with the creative environment. The regeneration of the Creative Quarter ensures that it is a sustainable community that is progressive in its vision for the future as well as providing affordable spaces and opportunities for continued growth.

The Foundation has built a portfolio of buildings that is respectful of their heritage, range of spaces and distinctive local character. A primary aim is not only to restore many of these historical and architectural features, but also to enable the reuse of previously derelict buildings for a range of uses and activities whilst preserving their original character. This is important in positive heritage regeneration where dereliction and abandonment are serious vulnerabilities that historic buildings can be at risk of. As has been explored in a number of the theme papers for this strategy, where possible new uses should be sought for historic buildings that have fallen out of use in order to preserve the building's history and also incorporate its heritage into development work so that these histories can still be reflected and experienced. Many of the properties in the Old High Street and Tontine Street were formerly retail units, and their shop fronts which are in some cases designated or are of local interest have been restored and regenerated for creative retailers. A number of historic buildings have also been restored and redeveloped for new uses such as residential or retail units whilst also retaining and enhancing their historic character.

The creative industries are a vital part of the Creative Quarter, and a number that are represented here are major players within the creative sector. *Cognitive* is an animation studio that helps people to learn and discover through animation, drawing and storytelling and is well known within this field. *Screen South* is the Regional Screen Agency for the South East of England and works to promote the region's talent as well as creating opportunities for regional crews and presenting films and entertainment to new audiences through enhanced access to festivals, exhibitions and regional archives. As well as creative industries, there are also a number of businesses that support the local community such as bars, cafes and restaurants. A number of high quality residential flats are also available for creative individuals who wish to be involved in the Creative Quarter community.

Together, the Foundations projects and other activities make important contributions to the historic built townscape as well as the work and visitor economies of Folkestone. These projects continue to provide valuable opportunities for

engagement in arts activities, involvement in local education initiatives, community development as well as the provision of healthy communities and other wider health benefits for local people and visitors alike. The Creative Quarter has grown as a vibrant community and is now considered to be a prime example of positive regeneration that is led by creativity and the local historic environment.

Folkestone Townscape Heritage Initiative (FTHI)

As was mentioned earlier, the FTHI is a partnership between Kent County Council, the District Council and the Creative Foundation. As a result of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the FTHI began work in 2012 to improve the built historic environment of Character Area 4 in Folkestone. This is primarily achieved through the repair and conservation of buildings that are still in-use, the reinstatement of architectural features and reuse of abandoned historic buildings as well as the enhancement of the surrounding public space.

An assessment of Character Area 4 concluded that there were 9 prioritisation criteria in relation to the townscape:

1. Location (must be within Character Area 4)
2. Heritage value
3. Condition (taking into account the visual amenity and historic character)
4. Prominence (location)
5. Group impact (taking into consideration critical mass)
6. Occupancy (partially or totally vacant due to repair and maintenance issues)
7. Viability (future use and sustainability if work carried out)
8. Owner sign-up (likelihood of owner involvement)
9. Value for money

A filtering system was then put in place against which all properties are assessed and either fall into critical, priority or reserve categories. This has resulted in a list of 106 properties, 1 of which is categorised as critical, 14 as a priority and the remaining 91 as reserves that are ordered based on their assessment scores. Since the start of the initiative, a number of buildings have now been restored and reinstated with historical features being incorporated into this regeneration work wherever possible. The FTHI continues to be ongoing and work continues to regenerate the historic built townscape of Folkestone's Character Area 4 in partnership with the Creative Foundation.

Like the Creative Foundation, the FTHI facilitates a number of events, activities and ways for people to engage with the initiative as well as becoming involved in heritage conservation and regeneration. The initiative has a number of wider implications for the local community such as the engagement with local educational institutions as well as health benefits particularly for mental wellbeing. A number of guided walks, community heritage talks and heritage interpretation workshops are regularly run in partnership with the Canterbury Archaeological Trust as well as local historians and professionals in order to enable people to learn about their local heritage and to take ownership of this legacy. Temporary exhibitions are also held that illustrate the ongoing work within the FTHI area as well as highlighting the local heritage and creative offering as part of the regeneration work.

Valuable opportunities for training and internships are also provided, many in partnership with the East Kent College and other heritage or industry professionals. The FTHI works with the East Kent College to provide training for students on the maintenance and work involved with historic properties. Internships are also offered to students from the college that allow them to work on various projects as part of the FTHI. A number of workshops held in partnership with heritage industry professionals have also been held on areas such as lime skills and built heritage conservation and are open to all that are interested. Ultimately these events and activities provide important opportunities for people to play an active role within their community and to become empowered in order to make decisions about their own heritage. The FTHI aims to improve the quality of life for the local community through investment in and regeneration of the historic environment.

Statutory Protection and Designations

The area covered by the FTHI and Creative Quarter constitutes Character Area 4 which is part of the overall Conservation Area for Folkestone. Conservation Areas are primarily determined by the local planning authority and are designated for their special architectural and historic interest. The designation of a Conservation Area introduces controls over the development or demolition of unlisted properties and trees within and immediately surrounding its boundaries so as to protect the quality and special interest of the local neighbourhood as well as maintaining the local character. People who live within a Conservation Area will need to obtain permission from the Council before making any alterations to their property and surrounding land. Any development or alterations should preferably be in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and maintain the special architectural and historic environment.

A Conservation Area Appraisal has been completed for Character Area 4 or Folkestone Old Town which provides a summary of the history and development of the area. It also identifies what makes the area special and lists features such as historic buildings and locally significant buildings that are important to the local character and overall special architectural and historic environment. This document will aid in decisions regarding planning applications that are within or next to the Character Area 4 whilst also providing evidence for its special architectural and historic character. It will further support the preservation of the historic environment here and allow it to continue to play an important role in the regeneration work of the Creative Foundation and FTHI in order to create a sustainable and rich environment.

Within Character Area 4 there are a number of buildings that are designated as Listed Buildings. These have been designated for their architectural and historical interest as well as their ability to illustrate the development of Folkestone primarily through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A number of the designated properties on The Old High Street have been restored and redeveloped as part of the Creative Quarter community and FTHI and are now being reused by businesses and as residential flats. Designated properties along Church Street are also on the reserve list for work by the FTHI. The table below details the designated buildings that are located within the Character Area 4 and Creative Quarter. It should also be noted that there are several more buildings that are not designated but are considered to be of special local interest such as those along Tontine Street.

Asset	Location	Form & Date	Designation & Protection
Baptist Church	Rendezvous Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
Library & Museum	Grace Hill	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
Former Technical Institute	Grace Hill	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
Masonic Hall	Grace Hill	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
4, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
20 and 22, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Eighteenth Century/Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
23 and 25, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
24, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
26-30, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
53, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
55, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
57, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
59, The Old High Street	The Old High Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
4 and 6, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Late Eighteenth Century/Early Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
5-13, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
12, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
14 and 16, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
18, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
26 and 28, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
30 and 32, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
34-40, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
82, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building	Grade II Listed

		Nineteenth Century	Building
84 and 86, The Bayle	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
The Battery	The Bayle	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
The British Lion	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
The Globe Inn	The Bayle	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
Priory House	The Bayle	Building Eighteenth Century/Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
12-16, Church Street	Church Street	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
18 and 20, Church Street	Church Street	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II* Listed Building
22 and 24, Church Street	Church Street	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
26 and 28, Church Street	Church Street	Building Eighteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
The Parish Church of St Mary and St Eanswythe	Church Street	Building Archaeology Largely rebuilt in Nineteenth Century but retains earlier features to as far back as the thirteenth century.	Grade II* Listed Building
Former Municipal Offices	Church Street	Building Late Eighteenth Century/Early Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
1 and 2, Albion Villas	Albion Villas	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
3 and 4, Albion Villas	Albion Villas	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building
5 and 6, Albion Villas	Albion Villas	Building Nineteenth Century	Grade II Listed Building

Regeneration Work to Character Area 4 and the Creative Quarter

Below follows a few examples of the work that has been completed by the Creative Foundation and FTHI that demonstrates positive heritage regeneration and the creation of a vibrant and sustainable creative community. It also highlights the many benefits of reinstating and restoring abandoned historic buildings in order to revitalise a community and attract new people and businesses. The creation of the Creative Quarter has attracted a variety of industries, businesses and individuals that are now making important contributions to the local community in a number of ways that

includes improving health and wellbeing, providing opportunities for communal engagement in creative activity and running a lively calendar of cultural events throughout the year that appeals to wide audiences. The reuse of historic buildings not only maintains the special historic character that makes a place unique, but it also creates an attractive place to live, work, study and visit as is demonstrated here. The Creative Quarter has become a cultural hub and increasingly popular tourist attraction that greatly benefits its local community, economy and visitors as well as growing to be sustainable for the future. The reinstatement of buildings in this area will continue as part of the Creative Foundation and FTHIs work, and provide more new spaces and residences for creative individuals as part of a vibrant creative community.

18 - 24 The Old High Street

Purchased: 2003

Refurbishment Completed: 2014

Unit Size: 284 sqm

Cost of Refurbishment: £859,171

The buildings in this area are considered to have a high heritage value whether they are designated or not due to their special architectural and historic interest. No. 20, 22 and 24 are Grade II Listed Buildings whereas No. 18 is not designated though it is considered to be important to the overall historic character and therefore warrants its own heritage value.

The Old High Street (previously the High Street but renamed in 1973) was a busy thoroughfare from the eighteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century, but then declined into the second half of the twentieth century when the new town centre as it is known today began to grow in size. Three of these properties were owned by a local grocer in 1782 and there is further evidence that all of these buildings were once retail premises. No. 16 which adjoins No. 18 is a gap space and it is believed that the building was destroyed during the Second World War. In the 1960s No. 24 was combined with No. 20 and 22 in order to create a builders' merchant. In 1972 the Old High Street was then under threat as it had been suggested that it be demolished, however its heritage value was recognised and it was subsequently included in the Folkestone Conservation Area. In 1992 Millets outdoor clothing retailer took over the leases for No. 18-24 but then vacated the premises in 1997 following a fire. Since then, it has remained empty and fallen into a state of disrepair. It was purchased by the Creative Foundation in 2003 and later assessed as critical by the FTHI.

The overall plan for the properties was to bring them back into active use so that they could resume contributing to the local historic character and economic activity along the Old High Street. Each property was extensively repaired, internal alterations made and refurbished. No. 18, 20 and 22 were also extended and then the original style of the premises was reinstated. This includes the characteristic descending stepped shop front and upper floors as well as the restored façade. The ground floor of No. 18, 20 and 22 now constitutes one retail unit as the Steep Street Café which is a literary coffee shop that is inspired by the famous book cafes of Paris. It is now a popular location with the local community as well as visitors. No. 24 is being used as a smaller retail unit and is occupied by Mannafesto. The historic

entrances to the properties have also been reinstated enabling improved access to the premises as well as the residential flats on the first floor of No. 20 and 22. All of the flats are currently occupied by people from the creative industry.

Glassworks

Purchased: 2007

Refurbishment Completed: 2013

Unit Size: 3100 sqm

Cost of Refurbishment: £4,163,671

The Glassworks was formerly the site of a Baptist Church that was later replaced by the premises of the Hastings and Folkestone Glassworks Company Ltd who were in operation until the end of the twentieth century. The collection of buildings here had fallen out of use and into a state of disrepair until it was purchased by the Creative Foundation in 2007. The buildings were then remodelled by award-winning architects Pringle Richards Sharratt and reinstated as the home of the Folkestone Academy sixth form students. Known as the Glassworks, it is now equipped with fantastic educational facilities such as purpose built dance studios, a photography studio, recording studio and digital music suite. Over 70 courses are offered which cover a variety of Level 3 subjects, and there are also opportunities for students to engage with the Creative Foundation and FTHI throughout the course of study.

The Glassworks plays an important role within the local community and has also revitalised the area through the facilitation of educational facilities that attracts wider audiences to the area and also offers important opportunities for the engagement with creative learning. Education and engagement with students is an important part of the overall creative activity promoted by the Creative Foundation and FTHI and will have wider impacts such as improved quality of life, better communal as well as individual wellbeing as well as increased training opportunities for future employment.

53 – 57 Tontine Street

Purchased: 2007

Refurbishment Completed: 2010

Unit Size: 320 sqm

Cost of Refurbishment: £1,612,270

The properties at 53 – 57 Tontine Street are undesignated but have been reinstated to play an important role within the local community. The spaces that have been made available through extensive renovation are now occupied by a variety of industries and also serve as residential accommodation. 53 Tontine Street, The Brewery Tap, is now home to the postgraduate faculty from the University for the Creative Arts and is used as a project and exhibition space for students. The Brewery Tap was previously a public house that had become increasingly rundown and eventually fell out of use. The renovation work done by the Creative Foundation has retained the original frontage and so the building still reflects its special architectural and historic character.

Cognitive occupies space at 55-57 Tontine Street. Their work helps people to discover and learn through storytelling through animation. They are a well-known

company who work nationally and internationally and make an important contribution to the local creative community. As well as *Cognitive*, the remaining spaces at 53-57 Tontine Street are occupied by Folkestone Pilates, Lorraine Lucas (therapist), Tallulah & Hope (retail) and Rudy Warman & the Heavy Weather (musicians). The regeneration of 53-57 Tontine Street has allowed for the reinstatement of these properties and their reuse by a variety of occupants who form valued parts of the local creative community. Their historic character has also been retained and so these properties continue to contribute to the special local character.

65 – 69 Tontine Street

Purchased: 2006

Refurbishment Completed: 2009

Unit Size: 630 sqm

Cost of Refurbishment: £1,077,368

65-69 Tontine Street are not designated properties but still make important contributions to the historic and architectural character of the Folkestone Old Town. The buildings had become derelict and suffered extensive natural and animal damage before they were purchased by the Creative Foundation in 2006. Extensive restoration and refurbishment work was done to reinstate these properties that now provide three ground floor units and nine offices of varying size on the upper three floors. The buildings architectural features have been retained and they are now able to continue making valuable contributions to the local historic character as well also the local community.

The Folkestone People's History Centre is now one occupant at 65-69 Tontine Street. The group was founded in 2005 and is a community based group that is dedicated to the exploration of Folkestone's past. Bedonwell Counselling is another current occupant and operates as a privately run provider of accredited counselling training courses.

Block 67 is the Creative Foundation's studio space at 67 Tontine Street and is the base for a number of workshops, talks, events and activities that embrace creativity and exploration. A supportive and stimulating environment is provided at Block 67 to encourage a wide range of people to engage with the various programmes of creative activity. This work links into the events at the Folkestone Quarterhouse festivals, Folkestone Book Festival and Folkestone Triennial. Block 67 also supports local schools in the curation and exhibition of students work in order to highlight the professional process from start to finish. Opportunities for artists to teach within the local community and schools are also offered.

The Sidney de Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health also occupies space at 65-69 Tontine Street and carries out important research into the potential benefits of music and other participative arts activities on various health challenges and disabilities. The centre has conducted the world's first randomised controlled trial on community singing in older adults and assessed the benefits for mental health. They have also shown the positive impacts that group singing has on enduring mental health problems as well as on illnesses such as COPD. The group were commissioned by the Folkestone Triennial in 2014 to produce "Lookout" which was a new choral piece that was created in collaboration between the composers and

participants that included children and people suffering with Parkinson's disease. The filmed performance was displayed as part of the Triennial and clearly highlights the strong links between creative activity and improved health and wellbeing. Future research is also being conducted into the benefits of other arts and cultural activities on additional health challenges such as Dementia and children with communication difficulties.

Overall, not only has the special architectural and historic character of these buildings been restored and brought back into active use, but the occupants are also making important contributions to the local creative communities as well as to improving communal and wider health.

Vulnerabilities and Opportunities

The following section will consider a number of vulnerabilities and opportunities that arise when looking at the ongoing regeneration of Character Area 4 by the Creative Foundation and FTHI. The below is intended to raise points for further discussion and consideration as well as to help in informing future plans for the development and regeneration of other properties and public spaces within this area.

Vulnerabilities arising from the development of Character Area 4

1: It is important that the Creative Quarter has a positive relationship with the rest of Folkestone and is well integrated with other areas such as Folkestone central and the Leas. The regeneration of this area has been instrumental in raising the profile of Folkestone and is a particularly important asset for the town. It is a central part of recent positive changes to Folkestone that demonstrates the town's ability to adapt to modern audiences and carve out a new identity as an up-and-coming coastal destination. In the past, Folkestone has experienced periods of decline which have resulted in areas becoming rundown, outdated and a number of assets being abandoned such as the properties along the Old High Street. The regeneration work by the Creative Foundation and FTHI has shown how heritage and creative-led regeneration of buildings and areas that have fallen out of use can result in the creation of new vibrant and sustainable communities.

However, there is a need to ensure that this is not an isolated pocket of regeneration that is not well integrated with other parts of Folkestone. This is particularly relevant currently as there are also plans to develop the Folkestone seafront area into a new and diverse environment in which residential, leisure and business spaces will be available. Regeneration of the Folkestone Harbour Arm by the new Folkestone Harbour Company has also created a new and diverse cultural offering that would be far more powerful if integrated with the Creative Quarter and other prospective developments. Within Folkestone there are a number of distinct areas that have their own unique characters, such as the contrast between the Leas area and current town centre. Whilst it is important to recognise these areas as diverse and different from one another, together they make a far more powerful and attractive offering for local people and visitors alike. Such a varied and rich character can offer a number of draws, but it remains important to ensure that they have a positive relationship to one another all being parts of Folkestone that collectively make up its unique and special identity.

2: Work to restore and reinstate areas of Character Area 4 by the Creative Foundation and FTHI need to be in keeping with the overall identity and sense of place that is unique to the Folkestone Old Town. As has already been explored, Character Area 4 is part of the overall Conservation Area for Folkestone and is therefore subject to certain controls. This means that any development to the built and natural environment within and surrounding the Conservation Area is subject to Council permission and must also be in keeping with the special character of the site. Folkestone Old Town is unique for its special architectural and historical character that reflects the growth of Folkestone primarily during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the layout further reflecting its earlier origins. Features such as the shop fronts and facades are still able to illustrate the history of the Old Town as the heart of Folkestone that was once the main thoroughfare and economic centre through the town. It is significant that these assets have survived as other coastal towns have seen extensive change in recent decades which makes it even more important to retain this historical character. Whilst the regeneration work involves the incorporation of contemporary architecture with historic features and buildings, it is vital to integrate the two in a way that enhances the local historic character rather than detracting from it.

The historic environment of Folkestone Old Town is central to its identity and can be used to enhance the creative community that is being created here. There are significant opportunities for the local communities to learn about their local heritage and as a result make decisions about its future as part of the place that they live and work in. The unique heritage here also acts to attract visitors and holiday-makers to the area and so again it is important to preserve this resource which is ultimately finite. The work of the Creative Foundation and FTHI is a valuable opportunity to demonstrate the positive contributions that heritage can make to the regeneration of an area, and every effort should be made to retain this special local character and sense of place.

3: Wherever possible, historic features should be retained and restored to avoid the loss of the special architectural and historic character of Folkestone Old Town. A number of the properties that have now been purchased by the Creative Foundation had fallen into varying states of disrepair and dereliction. This has meant that a number of historic features may have deteriorated beyond the point of rescue and have subsequently been lost. Every effort should be made to retain and restore these architectural and historic features wherever possible as they play such an important role in the local character and sense of place.

Some properties may have been empty for some time and have experienced extensive natural and animal damage. Some spaces may also require modification in order to adapt to new functions which again will put historic features at risk of loss or alteration beyond their original character. Whilst it is understood that there is a need to develop buildings so that they are able to be reinstated and reused and damage may also be extensive due to abandonment, it should also remain a priority to retain as much of the original historic character as is possible due to its significance to the local character and sense of place. Modifications or alterations must also be in keeping with the overall identity of the building and surrounding area to again preserve and maintain the local character that defines the Folkestone Old Town.

4: The Creative Quarter is in close proximity to more deprived areas of Folkestone and should work hard to be inclusive of all audiences. Whilst the Creative Foundation and FTHI have created and continue to grow a vibrant and diverse creative community, care should be taken not to exclude members of the local communities in the surrounding areas of Folkestone as well as groups of people who may or may not consider visiting the Creative Quarter. The creative activities that are available within the Creative Quarter are varied and aimed at wide audiences; however continued work on the creative community should avoid creating a clique here that may exclude some groups. Whilst you will never be able to please everyone as there is no “one size fits all” approach and creative activities will not appeal to everyone, consideration should be paid to creating a community and leisure offering that is accessible to as wider audiences as is possible. This will also be important in creating positive relationships with other diverse areas of Folkestone as well as becoming integrated with current and future developments.

Opportunities arising from the regeneration work by the Creative Foundation and FTHI to Character Area 4

1: The Creative Foundation and FTHI have established a dynamic and varied programme of cultural activities that raise awareness of the local heritage and offer valuable learning opportunities. Within Character Area 4 there is a rich cultural offering and a number of heritage assets that are essential to the local character and unique sense of place. The regeneration of the buildings and associated public spaces within the Folkestone Old Town has revitalised the area and established a new and thriving creative community that is now in a position to highlight and enhance the heritage within this area in new and diverse ways. The Creative Foundation and FTHI have raised awareness of the history of the Folkestone Old Town through a range of innovative interpretive initiatives and now offer a variety of programmes that enable people to become engaged with the local heritage. These include heritage walks, workshops and exhibitions that not only highlight the local heritage, but also offer opportunities for education, learning and training.

Visitors and the local community are able to fully appreciate the local heritage which has been restored, retained and reinstated as an integral part of the local character and townscape. It has been regenerated as part of an interactive and attractive creative community that offers a number of ways to become involved and engaged. A number of workshops are held that raise awareness of the need to preserve, care for and respect our historic environment which not only enables people to gain the skills to become actively involved in the care and maintenance of their local heritage, but also continues to highlight the extent of the heritage that exists within Character Area 4 and how valuable it is. Workshops on skills such as historic building maintenance, lime workshops and stone masonry are among the learning opportunities available as a result of the Creative Foundation and FTHI that will ultimately ensure the long-term survival of the local heritage as well as ongoing participation by the local community and visitors. This is also especially relevant for the occupants of reinstated historic buildings that will be able to utilise these learning opportunities to become actively involved in the ongoing maintenance and care of their properties.

The activities and programmes offered are also varied and so appeal to a range of audiences and are accessible to all who wish to utilise them. There are a number of ways to learn about heritage, and this is evident within the Creative Quarter where activities range from guided tours to storytelling through animation. The diverse creative community that has been established here has created a variety of learning resources and ways of engaging with heritage. Significantly, this will work towards more people being able to learn about heritage in ways that suit them and as a result empowering them to play an active role in their community as well as decisions involving their local heritage. In addition to the benefits this has for heritage, this will also have wider implications such as improving quality of life and encouraging greater communal engagement which will ultimately result in better health and wellbeing.

2: The regeneration of Character Area 4, in particular of the Creative Quarter, has created a unique shopping experience and reinstated a number of vacant units along the Old High Street and Tontine Street making for a more attractive and active environment.

During the second half of the twentieth century the Folkestone Old Town entered a period of decline after being the major thoroughfare and heart of leisure and economic activity within the town for a number of years. As a result, a number of units were abandoned and have remained unoccupied for some time, falling into varying states of disrepair. As the number of abandoned units increased, the Old Town became increasingly unattractive and underpopulated. However, the regeneration work done by the Creative Foundation and FTHI has reinstated and restored a number of units that are now reoccupied by new and diverse creative industries that form part of a growing creative and vibrant community. There is still an emphasis on individuality and so the businesses in the Old Town are independent which is in keeping with the distinctive historic character of the area. The visual quality of the streets and public spaces has also been greatly improved such as restored shop fronts and the new Payers Park that again lends to a far more attractive and appealing area.

In creating a more aesthetically appealing and active area, there are important opportunities for improved economic performance as well as attracting new businesses and residents. Greater footfall from increasing numbers of visitors can ensure that current businesses are able to develop as part of a niche retail destination within the Creative Quarter and the creative community here is able to continue growing. Brining more units back into use is another opportunity to further support the economic prosperity of the Creative Quarter and also ensure that the community here is sustainable. Around 300 jobs have been created to date as part of the regeneration work, and there are opportunities for this to continue.

3: A number of historic buildings and features have been restored and subsequently reinstated rather than demolished or destroyed which has supported the continuation of the strong sense of place and local character in the Folkestone Old Town. This presents important opportunities for the continued experience by the local community and visitors of the local histories that are retained within the Folkestone Old Town. Wherever possible, opportunities to adapt historic buildings for new uses and functions should be sought as it not only preserves a valuable historical resource, but is also adds value to the local community and enhances the quality of the living environment. This can also have wider impacts

such as improving the quality of life of the local residents and also adding monetary value to the site.

The architectural and historic heritage that has survived within the Character Area 4 is also important in illustrating the historical development of Folkestone and continues to play an essential role in creating a strong sense of place as well as local character. It is significant to the establishment of a vibrant and diverse creative community and presents important opportunities for heritage engagement and learning as has already been mentioned. Opportunities to encourage communal involvement and ownership over local heritage can ensure the longevity of the resource as well as wider benefits for the community such as improved wellbeing and active participation in decisions regarding heritage. The Creative Foundation and FTHI have worked hard to ensure that as many of the historic assets within Character Area 4 are retained and restored and they can then play an important role in wider heritage engagement programmes as part of these initiatives.

4: This regeneration work is one example out of other current or proposed developments to Folkestone that presents opportunities for positive integration across the town and an enhanced environment in which to live, work, study and visit. As has already been mentioned, the Creative Quarter is one of other positive changes to Folkestone in recent years that demonstrate the town's ability to adapt to modern audiences and establish a new identity as an up-and-coming coastal resort. The Folkestone Harbour Company has recently regenerated the Folkestone Harbour Arm which now has a strong cultural and leisure offering that attracts large numbers of visitors. There are also plans to develop the Folkestone seafront area as well as enhancement work at the Leas Coastal Park which will again provide positive regenerations of distinctive sites around Folkestone. This will offer valuable opportunities for these regenerated areas to link into one another and create positive relationships that encourage integration. Whilst it is important to recognise the distinctive characters of each area, collectively they will constitute a more powerful offering and sense of place for the local communities as well as for visitors to Folkestone.

5: There are a number of opportunities for training and learning as a result of the ongoing work by the Creative Foundation and FTHI. As has been mentioned, there is a varied programme of activities and events that provides opportunities for the engagement with the creative community and local heritage as well as training and learning. These range from heritage talks, guided walks and workshops. The Creative Foundation and FTHI also work closely with various educational institutions such as the East Kent College and Folkestone Academy to provide opportunities for students to become involved in work for the Foundation and FTHI through internships, volunteering and various projects. These educational opportunities are important not only to personal development but also to the ongoing care and awareness of the local heritage which will ensure the survival of the historic environment. Some workshops for example teach skills in maintaining historic buildings which supports local property owners in the maintenance of their own historic buildings. In teaching the local community about their heritage, these initiatives encourage people to feel empowered within their local community and able to make decisions about their own heritage.

6: The regeneration of Character Area 4 has wider benefits such as improving health and wellbeing. There is strong evidence for the positive affects of creative and cultural activity on health and wellbeing. As shown by the Sidney de Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, activities such as group singing can work to improve and reduce health challenges such as COPD, social exclusion and depression. It is well-known that the NHS and Social Care services are under immense pressures to transform the ways that care is provided in order to continue meeting the demands of a modern population. In particular, the financial deficits that are expected in a few years if things continue as they are will be critical and many will not be able to receive the care that they need as a result. The focus now has to be more on preventive measures rather than on curing once an illness or condition has taken hold, and it is evident that arts and culture initiatives are able to begin preventing and also reduce various health challenges, particularly where mental wellbeing is concerned.

The creative community that has been created at the Creative Quarter is in a unique position where it is able to begin demonstrating the benefits of creative and cultural activity on health and wellbeing. It has already been identified that providing a rich and attractive place to live, in this case through the preservation and enhancement of the special architectural and historic character of Character Area 4 in conjunction with contemporary regeneration, improves quality of life. The diverse programme of activities and events that the Creative Foundation and FTHI facilitates are significant in improving health and wellbeing through means such as providing opportunities for social networking, community engagement and confidence building. More specialised programmes like those run by the Sidney de Haan Research Centre can also impact on specific health challenges such as Dementia and Parkinson's disease. In the current climate non-medical interventions are likely to become far more important, and the Creative Foundation and FTHI are in a strong position to offer opportunities for social prescribing as part of the creative community at Folkestone Old Town.

Recommendations

- Create and maintain positive relationships with other parts of Folkestone to ensure integration across diverse areas. This is particularly relevant in light of current development plans for the Folkestone Harbour and seafront area.
- Continue to work on the wider benefits of creative and cultural activity, for example on health and wellbeing. Providing continued wider benefits may also ensure the longevity and wellbeing of the creative community here, as well as future investment or funding opportunities for specific programmes.
- Continue to build on a dynamic and diverse programme of events and activities to maintain communal and visitor engagement as well as awareness of the unique creative and heritage offering at the Creative Quarter.
- The regeneration of further properties that are yet to be developed should remain in keeping with the local character and where possible historic and architectural assets should be retained and incorporated into the reinstated building/s.