

State Intervention for Conservation in a Mixed Economy Policy and Practice in the United Kingdom

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Summary

The British system of protecting historic buildings and sites has grown and developed in complexity for a hundred years. Individually its separate components make sense in policy terms. Viewed collectively from an economic point of view, they present many paradoxical consequences, especially when their secondary effects are considered. Anyone thinking of adopting them as a model would do well to keep this in mind.

Introduction

To state the obvious, Britain is extremely well endowed with historic buildings and archaeological sites. To quote only one statistic, in England alone it has been estimated that there are 600,000 archaeological sites. As for our historic buildings, to strike a chauvinistic note, according to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, they represent "a richer variety of types, of styles and periods than exists anywhere else in the world".

British conservation policy, too, is remarkable for its variety and long history. William Stukeley's outrage at the destruction of many of the stones at Avebury, Wiltshire in the early eighteenth century was an early example of pressure for conservation. Both then and ever since, this has gone hand in hand with survey, field-work and recording.

For the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century, such concerns remained very much those of a minority. As the nineteenth century progressed however, changes gathered pace, including the development of more scientific methods of archaeology, and

the increasing practice of heavy restoration of churches and cathedrals and the destruction wrought in the development boom of the mid nineteenth century. These and other factors, including an increasing willingness to regulate private activity in the public interest, led to pressure for legislative protection for the most important sites. After one or two abortive efforts, the first Act of Parliament for the protection of ancient monuments was passed in the 1880s.

This measure has been followed over the subsequent century by a whole series of further enactments designed to protect ancient monuments, historic buildings and conservation areas from destruction, demolition or damaging alterations. Much later, in the middle of the present century, these restraints were joined by grant schemes, designed to present an incentive to the owners of buildings and monuments to repair them and to repair them properly.

Thus we have in place a system which provides both sticks and carrots to urge forward the recalcitrant donkey of good conservation. It may be helpful to give a brief outline of the current arrangements.

Legal Protection – Ancient Monuments

Since the 1880s the government has had the power to "schedule" ancient monuments which are considered to be of national importance. A description of the monument to be scheduled is prepared and its name is inscribed on the statutory schedule. Once that has been done, no works which would damage or affect it can be carried out without permission from the government. There are legal penalties for people who carry out work without permission, including the possibility of heavy fines.

At present, over 15,500 monuments are scheduled in England and Wales, over 5,500 in Scotland and over 1,000 in Northern Ireland. Programmes are in place to increase these numbers significantly in the coming decade, so that the total is likely to approach 80,000. The monuments scheduled include stone circles and prehistoric burial places, Roman fortifications and towns and substantial medieval ruins. They range in date from palaeolithic cave sites in Derbyshire to pill boxes from the Second World War.

Legal Protection – Historic Buildings

The process of protecting historic buildings which are still in use, as opposed to unoccupied monuments, is known as “listing”. The government has the power to protect buildings of special architectural or historic interest by including them in a list. When that has

been done, they may not be demolished, altered or extended in a way which affects their character without a special permission to do so having been obtained. Penalties exist for anyone found to have carried out works without permission.

During the 1980s the government initiated thorough reviews of lists of historic buildings, which have been kept since 1947. As a result, the numbers of listed buildings are increasing. There are now about 500,000 listed buildings in England and Wales, almost 40,000 in Scotland and 8,000 in Northern Ireland. Of these, about 1.5 per cent are in the very highest category of protection, and about 4 per cent in the next category, where in both cases central government is consulted on all work proposed. The remaining 95 per cent or so are looked after principally by the local level of government.

Table 1 : Statistics relating to listed buildings in England (a)

	Numbers (b)						
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Grade I	5,858	6,029	6,056	6,064	6,066	6,068	6,068
Grades II and II*	389,519	399,357	420,790	427,590	430,974	432,980	433,922
Total	395,377	405,383	426,846	433,654	437,040	439,048	439,990
Number de-listed during year	451	702	318	216	188	277	

Source : Department of National Heritage.

(a) Grade I : These are buildings of exceptional interest.

Grade II : These are buildings of special interest, which warrant every effect being made to present them.

Some particularly important buildings in Grade II are classified as Grade II*.

(b) Numbers of buildings listed as at 31 December in each year apart from 1992 for which data refers to 30 June and number de-listed covers 6 months to 30 June.

Generally speaking, the older and rarer a building, the more likely it is to be “listed”. Any building dating from before about 1700 and remaining in something like its original condition is likely to be listed, and so will most buildings from before 1840. From 1840 onwards there is greater selection and in the case of twentieth century buildings, those responsible for drawing up the lists, are very much more selective in assessing architectural interest. Only a handful of buildings since 1945 have been listed, the Royal Festival Hall in London, for example.

In recent years a register of historic gardens in England has been compiled in the same way as the register of historic buildings, although inclusion in the register does not give the same legal protection as the law provides for buildings. Almost 1,200 parks and gardens are listed, most of them providing the setting for historic buildings. A record of historic gardens in Northern Ireland includes over 500 sites, and in Scotland an Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes currently describes some 250 sites in detail and is being extended. This is one aspect of an

increasing attention to historic parks and gardens, which has led to some major reconstruction projects such as those at Painshill Park, Cobham in Surrey, Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire and Stowe Park in Buckinghamshire.

Legal Protection – Conservation Areas

In addition to the protection offered to individual monuments and buildings, since 1967 it has been possible for local government authorities to designate “conservation areas” where limited controls on development are intended to protect the character and appearance of a district or neighbourhood rather than individual buildings. Controls over the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas have existed since 1974. At present there are over 7,500 conservation areas in England and Wales, including the centres of most historic towns. They range in size from almost the whole of the city centre of Bath, to a few streets in many small towns and villages, and include the historic centres of 80 per cent of the 1023 towns in England and well over a quarter of the 10,500 villages. In Scotland there are 567 conservation areas. In Northern Ireland, where the Department of the Environment (NI) is responsible, there are currently about 40 areas, though this is expected to rise to 60 or so following a review.

The Grant System

In the period immediately following the Second World War it was felt that social and economic change, and the neglect of the years during the War threatened the physical survival of many of the great houses which represent for many people the most important and significant buildings in Britain. Following a special enquiry, legislative powers were taken and a special body, the Historic Buildings Council, was set up to make grants to the owners of “outstanding” historic buildings in order to contribute to the costs of necessary repairs, on condition that the works were carried out to a satisfactory standard.

In the years since the 1950s the grants system has been extended and modified, so that now it mirrors the system of legal protection. The most recent addition has been a scheme of grants specifically for cathedrals, which have hitherto been repaired and maintained at the expense of the church. Expenditure on grants has risen over the years so that in England alone, in 1991/92, £2 million was offered to cathedrals, £6.8 million to conservation areas, £8.5 million to churches, and £12 million to historic buildings and monuments. As Table 2 shows, expenditure 1984–1991 amounts to £219 million.

<i>Grant</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Expenditure 1984-1991 £ million (cash prices)</i>
Historic Building Grants (Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953)	To help repair any building of outstanding architectural or historic interest	91
Rescue Archaeology Grants (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979)	To aid recording and survey of threatened archaeological sites	47
Town Scheme and Conservation Area Grants (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)	To improve the character of conservation areas	27
Other Schemes	Mainly to aid buildings in London and ancient monuments	
National Heritage Memorial Fund (National Heritage Act 1980)	To help pay for the acquisition, maintenance and preservation of land buildings and objects of outstanding historic and other interest, which are of importance to the national heritage	
		219

Source: National Audit Office

The Nature of British Conservation Policy

The two elements which I have described so far are the two most noticeable aspects of conservation policy in Britain. Both of them involve interference in a free market. In the first place they interfere extensively in the freedom of the individual to do what he likes with his own property. In the second place they enable public money to be spent on the repair of property belonging to a private individual and for him to gain the benefit of that expenditure.

Underlying this there is a belief that the monuments, buildings and historic areas concerned represent a national asset which transcends the accident of their ownership and that there is a public good involved in ensuring their upkeep. When this idea is articulated, great importance is usually attached to the idea of permanence, to the need to hand on in good order to future generations what we have inherited from the past. Both these ideas are present in the word "Heritage" which has come to be used so much in the last ten or fifteen years and has gradually come to have some rather negative connotations.

If one looks beyond the two elements of legislative protection by listing and enhancement of repair by grant-giving, it is clear that this concept of the public interest is a powerful one in British conservation policy. For those who break the law by carrying out unauthorized work there can be criminal prosecution, heavy fines or even imprisonment. For those who fail to carry out necessary repairs there can be legal notices requiring them to do so, and if they do not comply, compulsory acquisition by government, central or local. In a recent landmark case the Secretary of State for National Heritage, as the central government minister responsible, served a compulsory purchase notice on the owners of an hotel in Buxton, Derbyshire, in a crescent designed by the famous architect Carr of York. And in another telling example of the force given to the public interest, those in receipt of grants for the repair of their

homes are required as a condition of receiving them to make suitable arrangements for public access on a certain number of days in the year. Thus the general public join those scores of public officials who have an absolute right to enter any home in the land.

Finally, when looking at the importance given to public interest, I should note that there are still cases in which it is held that the public interest requires the expenditure of public money in order to take a building or site into the ownership of the state or into other charitable ownership. The national Heritage Memorial Fund, a public body established in 1980, exists specifically for the purpose of preventing the "loss to the nation" of important works of art, land and building, historic documents and artefacts. Much of its work since its foundation has been concerned with the preservation of historic houses and their contents, such as Kedleston and Calke Abbey, both in Derbyshire, and Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire. This can, on occasion, involve considerable sums. On one occasion a special government grant of £25 million was made in order to rescue three country houses.

The Economic Basis of British Conservation Policy

From what I have said, it will be clear that the public interest is used as the reason for undertaking all sorts of activities which interfere with the free operation of the market. Prevailing orthodox economic theory is flouted. Policy-makers appear to look only at the immediate effects of a given measure, and to the best of my knowledge there has been no systematic attempt to discover the actual result of the operation of the system. Measures have been taken apparently in the pragmatic belief that regulation and financial incentive are the only tools available to the state in a mixed economy. Provided first-order effects appear to be beneficial, no-one asks theoretical questions such as those to which I will devote the rest of this paper. Quite a lot of money is spent in this way, as table 3 shows (overleaf).

Table 3: Department of National Heritage expenditure on the heritage

	<i>£million</i>				
	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90	
English Heritage (b)	61.6			72.9	
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England			3.9	4.2	7.8
National Heritage Memorial Fund(c)	1.5	(g)	1.5	.5	6.5
Royal Armouries	2.8	3.0	3.3	.6	4.0
Other bodies (d)	3.4		2.0	2.7	3.0
Historic Royal Palaces Agency	6.8			4.6	0.2
Occupied Royal Palaces and other buildings(e)	13		33.8(h)	25.0	28.1
Total(f)	92		120.5	114.4	128.9

Source: Department of the Environment, *Annual Report 1992*.

(a) Estimated

(b) Known formally as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission.

(c) Part-funding. Also funded by the OAL.

(d) This comprises a grant to the Redundant Churches Fund (£1.7 million in 1991/2) and part-funding of the Acceptance-in-Lieu Scheme (£650,000), and £494,000 (from the Department's Special Grants Programme for voluntary organisations) towards the costs of heritage activities and initiatives run by about 19 agencies.

(e) The vote for this category also includes expenditure on State Ceremonial. This element of expenditure has been excluded from the figures.

(f) Excluding expenditure on 'Royal parks' which amounted to £24.3 million in 1991/2.

(g) Including special grant (see Table 2.22).

(h) Including a one-off payment to the National Trust to take over responsibility for Ham House and Osterley Park Mansion.

The Economics of Building Repair Grants

Where grants to industry is concerned, the case made in favour of government intervention has often to do with international competitiveness, import substitution or the need to correct for some distortion in the market relating to location or distance. There are also often arguments relating to the costs of closing down an industry and the costs to the exchequer of maintaining people in unemployment.

None of these apply to grants of money to individuals to pay for the repair of their own houses. The late Lord Ridley, when Secretary of State for the Environment, was widely execrated for having argued that people who could not pay for the repair of their own houses should sell them to people who could afford to do so, thus avoiding any need

for grants. He was, however, doing no more than apply market economics. Why was he wrong? To argue against Lord Ridley's position it is necessary to assume that owners are more likely to remain in unrepaired houses than they are to sell them. In time such houses may be in danger of collapse and loss to the heritage. It is better to spend a bit of money now rather than a lot of money in future.

Of course this all makes perfect sense, but it leaves some awkward questions for the policy-maker once the principle of grants of this kind is accepted. Is it desirable to set up administrative rules intended to ensure equity as between individual recipients of a grant, as opposed to the buildings they own, and if so, what should those rules be? What financial enquiries is it proper to make into someone's affairs before deciding to

give a grant? And when you have answered all these questions, what should the policy be? For example, if someone is really pretty well off financially, a grant of 10 per cent of the cost may persuade him to repair his roof. Is that a better grant to make than a grant of 60 per cent to someone in a similar house who is less well off financially? If my house is stuffed with ancestral furniture and silver, making it an historical entity with its contents, should I be required to sell something in order to contribute to the maintenance of the fabric of the house? Under what circumstances should I be required to repay a grant for repair? If my granny dies and leaves me a lot of money, or only if I sell the house? Or not even then?

The current answers to most of these questions are pretty rough and ready. An attempt is certainly made to ensure that grants are only made when they are needed and English Heritage, as the provider of grants in England, looks at the financial means of applicants. It has constantly tried to improve its efficiency in doing so, but in my opinion it is perhaps fortunate that its methods have never come under scrutiny in the courts.

On the question of grant percentages, the standard rate (which has varied from time to time around the 50 per cent mark) has been used to avoid the fine judgments which would be involved in a sliding scale. In practice people have not been required to strip their houses of contents, though individual treasures are often sold to help upkeep, including silver plate from churches on occasion. Finally, grants are supposed to be repaid if a building is sold soon after the repair work has been carried out. In 1991/2 this recovered £154,000 only.

This adds up to a desire on the part of the policy-makers to get as much repair work as they can for the grant monies put in and to keep the system as fair as possible, without enquiring too deeply as to what "fair" might imply.

Those with an interest in grants are, of course, potential recipients for the most

part, and discussion therefore tends to concentrate on demand, or need – the two terms are not differentiated as clearly as they might be. British public expenditure rules also have a malign influence on the discussion of grant policy. Money is supposed to be spent in the year it is voted by Parliament, and because of the fluctuating time-lag between grant offers being made and money being claimed by recipients, the financial management of the grant programme is fiendishly difficult.

Questions are rarely asked about the consequences of the grants, and the difference they might be considered to have made to the conditions of the stock of British historic buildings and monuments. The inability to conduct a controlled experiment, of course, makes this an impossible question to answer with confidence. Recently however, the National Audit Office, the body with responsibility for investigating the efficiency and propriety of public expenditure and reporting to Parliament, carried out an investigation of this subject.

Unfortunately, this investigation failed to address most of the interesting questions raised by the economics of grants, and produced only superficial answers to the questions it did raise. On the question of grant effectiveness in ensuring preservation, the report of this inquiry merely pointed out that grants to one important building (Brighton West Pier) had not prevented further damage, and that three of the important buildings currently considered to be "at risk" had received grants in recent years.

Otherwise, the report concentrated on the need for criteria for selecting buildings to receive grants and for financial assessments of grant applicants. It pointed out that in one case a large grant had been made without adequate appraisal and urged improvements. It also stressed the importance of public access requirements and for arrangements to ensure that the costs of building works are kept to a minimum.

In other words, the discussion in this potentially important review on the part of the National Audit Office remained very firmly within the given parameters of discussion and provided no evidence – or even suggestions as to how evidence might be gathered – of the effect of grants for the repair of historic buildings. It does not even refer to the relevant fact that in any year there are only about a hundred cases in which listed buildings are either wholly or partially demolished.

Conclusions on the Economics of Grants

The only conclusions one can draw from the point of view of those who are economically even semi-literate about British historic building grants are somewhat depressing. These grants are paid in response to demand for them, and because there appears to be a public interest in maintaining the nation's stock of historic buildings. The arrangements in place ensure that they are spent on work to outstanding buildings and that the work is carried out to a satisfactory standard at reasonable cost. I should state at this point, therefore, that as a dedicated conservationist I applaud the existence of these grants and value their results. I am merely drawing attention to the shallowness of their theoretical foundations and the extent to which they operate without serious question or analysis. When one turns to the question of *causes celebres*, "rescues" and acquisition by the state, underlying assumptions are similarly unquestioned, and the consequences are more curious and, arguably, potentially harmful. These are the subject of the rest of my paper.

The Rescue of the Country House and the Economics of Tourism

I have already referred to cases in which it is decided that there is a public interest in taking property into public ownership, or ownership on behalf of the public, by the National Trust or English Heritage. Major cases of this kind almost invariably concern a large house and its contents which together are believed to represent an important historic entity,

often with furniture designed for the rooms in which it still stands and paintings collected at the time a house was built. It is interesting to note in passing that in order to gain sufficient support to be successful, polite architecture and plenty of gilt and mahogany appear to be pre-requisites; Monkton House, an interior which uniquely in Europe preserved the ethos of Surrealism, and Pitchfold Hall, a sixteenth-century vernacular building with associated content, have both been sold up in recent years following failed rescue bids.

These cases where a house needs to be "rescued" come about when a sale is in prospect, generally following a death, when heirs find themselves with a tax liability which they can meet only by disposing of assets. These days there are arrangements both specific to historic houses and their estates and more generally, which have led to inheritance tax in the United Kingdom being widely described as a voluntary tax. Taking advantage of them, however, depends on good legal advice and planning, and this doesn't always happen. It is perhaps not entirely without significance that in two of the cases in the 1980s which involved the greatest expenditure of tax-payers' money, the same firm of family solicitors was involved.

The typical house which needs rescuing in Great Britain is likely to be in a rather poor state of repair, with contents requiring extensive conservation. If it has been open to visitors at all, it will have been seen by relatively few people and it will not have been extensively advertised. Those houses and estates which have been widely advertised and run on a quasi-commercial basis will, you can be sure, have sophisticated tax-avoidance measures in place.

Following the death or other event which calls for the rescue, a complicated financial package will be put together. It will involve a number of institutions: the Inland Revenue and the Treasury, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the National Trust and English Heritage. At the end of a successful operation one is

likely to find that an important historic building and its contents have been repaired and restored. Ownership will have passed to the National Trust, but the former owner may well continue to live in the property. The number of visits will go up greatly and the house will be advertised much more widely.

From the point of view of conservation, the two significant changes are the repairs to the property and the increase in its promotion. The repairs are likely to be expensive, but to represent a relatively small percentage of the costs of the whole operation, which is really about tax liability and the valuation and sale of works and chattels. The increase in promotion is, however, an interesting phenomenon.

In Britain, tourism is a major industry, and visits to historic properties are an important element in the tourist market, as the figures show in tables 4, 5 and 6.

Table 4: Visits to historic properties 1985 and 1990

	Millions(a)	
	1985	1990
Cumbria	0.8	1.0
Northumbria	1.4	1.9
North West	2.1	2.7
Yorkshire/Humberside	5.8	5.9
Heart of England	4.9	5.6
East Midlands	1.9	2.6
Thames & Chilterns	4.5	4.1
East Anglia	3.5	4.1
London	12.3	11.3
West Country	7.4	7.7
Southern	3.1	3.6
South East	6.6	7.6
All England	54.3	58.1
Northern Ireland	-	0.4
Scotland	-	6.2
Wales	-	2.5
United Kingdom	-	67.2

Source: Sightseeing in 1985 and Sightseeing in the UK 1990, BTA/ETB Research Services, October 1986 and October 1991 respectively.

(a) The figures include most cathedrals but exclude the estimated 12 million visits to churches.

Table 5: Reasons for visiting Britain 1990

	Percentages									
	All	Residence				Age				
		West Europe	North America	Other English speaking	Other	16-24	25-34	35-54	55-64	65+
Visiting "heritage" sites, castles, monuments, churches etc.	37	34	44	42	35	39	37	38	32	25
Visiting "heritage" exhibits, museums etc.	30	28	37	29	29	32	31	28	32	19
Performing arts - Theatre, music etc.	19	15	26	23	21	21	22	17	13	15

Source: BTA Overseas Visitor Survey, 1990. Based on a sample of approximately 2,500 visitors to Britain.

Table 6: Visits to historic properties 1990 and 1991(a)

Ownership	Number of Properties	Number of visitors		1991/1990 Percentage change
		1990 (thousands)	1991 (thousands)	
England				
English Heritage	89	4,601	4,446	- 3.4
Government (b)	11	3,950	3,432	-13.1
Local Authority	56	4,011	3,920	- 2.3
National Trust	121	6,954	7,113	+ 2.3
Private	110	12,073	11,903	- 1.4
Total	387	31,589	30,814	- 2.5
Scotland				
Government	-	-	-	-
Historic Scotland (c)	36	2,383	2,207	- 7.4
Local Authority	7	531	470	-11.5
National Trust for Scotland	22	874	871	- 0.3
Private	21	1,503	1,384	- 7.9
Total	86	5,291	4,932	- 6.8
Wales				
Cadw	19	1,353	1,217	-10.1
Local Authority	4	200	187	- 6.5
National Trust	8	432	438	+ 1.4
Private		123	121	- 1.6
Total	32	2,108	1,963	- 6.9
Northern Ireland				
Government		54	63	+16.7
Local Authority	4	84	100	+19.0
National Trust	7	142	159	+12.0
Private		-	-	-
Total	12	280	322	+15.0
Total UK	517	39,268	38,031	-3.2

Source: Visits to Tourist Attractions 1991, BTA/ETB Research Services, May 1991.

(a) Based on a constant sample, namely those of the properties which recorded 10,000 or more visitors in 1991, for which corresponding data was also available for 1990.

(b) Including the Tower of London, which recorded 2.297 million visitors in 1990 and 1.924 million in 1991, a drop of 16.2 per cent.

(c) Including Edinburgh Castle, which recorded 1.078 million visitors in 1990 and 0.974 million in 1991, a drop of 9.6 per cent.

Tourism is also a somewhat volatile market, prone to recession and to such external shocks as the oil-price rise, which brought an end to a period of consistent growth, and the Iraq War.

Table 7: Trend in numbers of visits to historic properties in England (a)
Indices (1976 = 100)

	Constant Sample	All Attractions
1976		100
1977		109
1978		114
1979		108
1980		105
1981		96
1982		97
1983		102
1984		108
1985		114
1986		107
1987		118
1988		122
1989		127
1990		129

Source: Sightseeing in the UK 1990, BTA/ETB Research Services, October 1991.

(a) All visits to monitored properties, not just those above a certain minimum number.

In circumstances such as these, the visitor market in Britain has become more competitive, and that process has been encouraged by the great success story of the 1980s, the Jorvik Viking Centre. This centre, run by the York Archological Trust, uses advanced display techniques to tell the story of life in York at the Viking period. More than half a million visitors a year have consistently travelled past the exhibition in the special moving carriages, generating large financial surpluses for the Trust.

Unfortunately, out of good comes evil. The arrival of one so-called "dark ride" in Britain had two consequences. One was an increase in visitor expectations and a tendency to be dissatisfied with more low-level, low-tech explanations of historic sites. The other was the belief on the part of tourist operators generally, and the owners of historic properties in particular, that very heavy investment in interpretation was likely to be commercially successful.

Fortunately for conservation, there is already evidence that the last assumption is false, with a number of failures, relative or absolute, in visitor centres which were invested in heavily in what seemed to be prime locations such as Oxford and Canterbury. The reason I say "fortunately" is that the prospect of both visitors and investment being drawn away from the purposes for which they are most needed, the repair and maintenance of historic buildings and monuments. My own involvement in this area, as head of properties at English Heritage led me to the opinion that visitors will increasingly look to active participation in historical interpretation, even if only by pushing buttons or turning levers, rather than passive exposure.

Be that as it may, the newly rescued country house will join an increasingly competitive market, most probably being opened to the public by the National Trust or English Heritage. Thus it becomes part of a group of properties with large advertising budgets and resources behind them, both with fairly ready access to public funds; the

Marks and Spencers of the heritage world. (I hope that even for an international readership it will not be necessary to explain who Marks and Spencers are.)

What, then, of the small local shop? I fear the answer is all too clear. Consider the case of poor Lady Something. For years she has struggled to keep the roof on her Queen Anne house, overshadowed by the Robert Adam masterpiece twelve miles away, but not hopelessly so, because Lord Thing is just as amateurish as she is. Then Lord Thing dies with his affairs in a frightful mess. By the time this is all sorted out there is a smart new tea-room in Lord Thing's stables, and a special exhibition of the working models of traction engines made out of port bottles and cartridge cases by the fifth Lord Thing in the 1920s. These are so fascinating that several television programmes are made about them.

Poor Lady Something finds that her visitor numbers are down by 2,000 per year, wiping out her profits from opening the house. Her approach to English Heritage for a major grant to mend the roof is deterred by two things: her own inability to find her share of the expenditure needed, and the shortage of funds for grants at English Heritage. (Amongst the reasons for this shortage of grant funds are the pressure for investment in new facilities at English Heritage properties, and a squeeze on its government grant because of the success with which it markets its properties and increases its income as a result.)

Anxiety over the house drives Lady Something increasingly to the bottle, and in a few years she dies, a shadow of her former self. No sooner has she done so than the art historians descend on Something Hall. The account books for the furniture turn up and it mostly turns out to have been *in situ* since 1705 when the house was built. What's more, not a lick of paint has been applied since Lady Colefax decorated the house in 1936. All in all, it's a miraculous survival, and a campaign is started to save it for the nation. It will cost about £ 10 million one way and another, but the visitor potential is enormous.

Conclusions

The frivolous case-study of Something Hall is not intended as a serious commentary, but it is intended to underline the complicated nature of the processes which we are concerned with. Like the commentary I have made, my conclusions are simple and obvious. There are three of them :

(a) Any action in the area of public policy is likely to have secondary consequences which may not have been foreseen. In a mixed economy these will often involve market forces negating the effect of measures designed to circumvent them.

(b) It is therefore our duty as conservationists to think really long and hard about all the likely effects of the measures we purpose, if we are not to run the risk of disappointment.

(c) The economic consequences of cultural tourism need to be watched as carefully as the physical consequences for the sites where it takes place. Otherwise there is a danger that those sites which are not destroyed by over-visiting will be destroyed by neglect and shortage of funds.