

## Case Study: Restoration of Chester Rows Heritage Infrastructure

Chester Rows can be traced back over 800 years and are a unique series of covered galleries that together form a 'double tier' street pattern in the heart of Chester city centre. Radiating from the Cross, in the heart of the Roman walled city, these historic high streets contain over 100 Listed Buildings and are a living environment that have evolved and been added to with every century. Today the Rows host over 200 shops, including many independent traders and eateries - together with hotels, offices, and community spaces – who chose to continue this legacy in the heart of Chester.

The ambition of the project was to refurbish the historic fabric of the accessible spaces within Chester Rows, including the 'stallboards' on the upper tiered walkway which were historically used for trading but many of which had fallen into disrepair.



Heritage consultants Donald Installs Associates with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Conservation team identified works in line with historic records. Reclessia, historic conservation specialists, then undertook works including removing bitumen or mid-20th century overboarding and replacing with hand-made oak, repairs to ceilings, balustrades, and masonry as well as painting in period colours.



Works included refurbishment of pedestrian bridges which had lost railings and been boarded up with fly posting and graffiti, to have a cumulative impact on the integratory of the heritage environment.



Alongside works to refurbishment to historic buildings, works also extended to improving the adjoining alleyways, patch repaired over generations providing a critical function for business operation. They form a very visible part of the urban landscape so investment in these areas have a cumulative impact on the whole area.

**Funding:** The works were funded as part of Chester Rows Heritage Action Zone co-funded by Historic England

**Recognition:** Project was nominated by 300 members of the public – and won- the Chester Civic Trust's principal award for best heritage project in 2023.

**Top Tip:** Concentration of delivery of heritage refurbishment in adjacent buildings, maximises the impact ensuring greater community recognition of works undertaken and thus, their on-going support for works.



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