

# A much brighter future now seems certain for cultural high lights!

## Heritage

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If you're wondering how important old streetlights are to Derry's historic, social and cultural story, just have a look at some old photos.

In one of the most iconic images, a dying Jackie Duddy is carried along Chamberlain Street, led by the then Fr Daly waving his blood-stained handkerchief.

Prominent in the foreground is an old lamp post. Like sentries keeping watch, they stood serene in old streets devastated by slum clearance, bomb blast or worse. Sometimes they were all that survived.

The recent DSD allocation of £430,000 to upgrade public realm and repair historic street lights in Asylum Road, Bayview Terrace, Princes Street and Princes Terrace, is a welcome closing chapter in the story of Walled City Partnership's efforts to save Derry's remaining collection of old streetlights.

A hell-for-leather drive to 'improve' the look of the place for floods of 2013 visitors saw old streetlights, unrecognised as cultural heritage, removed from two of our finest Georgian streets.

By July 2012, Clarendon and Queen Streets' distinctive lamp posts had been replaced by 'reproductions' bearing no resemblance to the slender elegance and subtle detailing of the original castings.

Realising the rest of Derry's historic collection would likely join their Clarendon and Queen Street cousins in some scrap heap in the sky, Walled City Partnership [WCP] researched their significance.

What a revelation! Clarendon Street Conservation Area streetlights are at least eighty-five years old and may date back to 1894 when Derry electrified its streetlights.

Unique in Northern Ireland, the remaining sizeable collection could be the oldest on this island. That's pretty special and very significant. The lights were reported to be beyond repair. WCP contacted Bristol's master ironworker, Geoff Wallis, who immediately advised that repair of old cast iron streetlights is commonplace.

WCP's dissemination of its



Repaired Asylum Road streetlights - three different types - before their reinstatement.

findings to the wider community attracted the interest of several effective print, radio and TV journalists. The collective effort generated very positive outcomes.

As well as retaining a stretch of old granite kerbs in Clarendon Street, all the original cast iron streetlights in Asylum Road have been repaired to best conservation practice.

It turns out that one of the three types in Asylum Road was made locally in Brown's Foundry. The foundry's name casts into the lamp post base reveals which.

Unique, distinctive, authentic, and of this place, Derry's remaining historic streetlights seems to have a whole lot brighter future now thanks to the positive, enthusiastic action by Ken Whiteside and

Deidre Mackel of DRD Roads Service, supported by DSD.

Discovering landscape architect's design skills had not been employed in Clarendon and Queen Street, further representation by WCP resulted in DSD confirming landscape architects will be appointed to prepare design proposals for forthcoming public realm works within WCP's Townscape Heritage Initiative area.

in the walled city.

It goes without saying high calibre landscape design skills will be necessary in other conservation area streets, even minor ones, like Princes Street and Princes Terrace.

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