

Foreword by
Sir Neil Cossons
Chairman of English Heritage

The decision by UNESCO to confer World Heritage status on Liverpool confirms what English Heritage, Liverpool City Council and the people of Liverpool have always known – it is beyond question one of the great cities of the world. Liverpool's historic buildings are instantly recognisable and are a proud reminder that this was a hugely important maritime and mercantile city on the world stage; gateway to the new world, Liverpool was the greatest seaport of the old.

Today we see Liverpool's future intimately bound up with the celebration of its distinguished past. 21st century Liverpool is undergoing an extraordinary period of development that will change the way the city looks forever. It is only right, therefore, that Britain's world-famous industrial past be recognised, preserved and protected as the city embraces the great opportunities for regeneration and prosperity. However, it is our duty to ensure that we do not unknowingly lose the very things that make Liverpool special.

All great cities go through cycles of growth, decay, and hopefully revival. Liverpool's acknowledged decline in the latter part of the 20th century has been reversed through a vigorous and enthusiastic renaissance that is being driven by all of its citizens and those who realise its potential.

At the core of this vigour is a powerful realisation that the legacy of the city's distinguished past provides the key to an equally distinguished and perhaps even more vibrant future. As England's finest Victorian city Liverpool enjoys a unique opportunity to honour its great architectural heritage by finding new uses for its eminent buildings. And the city can further endorse that inheritance by setting superlative standards for the new.

World Heritage status focuses attention on the need to manage change carefully and to take advantage of the enormous asset that the city's historic environment affords us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Neil Cossons". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'N'.