



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·  
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

*Making Heritage Work*

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Dear Ms Phipps

### **APPRENTICESHIPS IN WALES**

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Thank you for inviting us to participate in this consultation.

A major aspect of the conservation of the historic environment is the quality of implementation of maintenance, restoration and complementary new developments. This requires a building industry with appropriate skills such as stone masonry, traditional carpentry and joinery, the use of lime mortars and plasters, traditional slating and tiling and lead and other architectural metalwork.

The skills base for many of these has improved from the very low ebb of 20 or 30 years ago, but such skills require significant training and experience to be carried on well. Most training of this sort is carried out by specialist builders with or without the help of craft skills courses and formal apprenticeships. But the supply of suitable craftspeople needs to be maintained and increased, and the Institute believes that apprenticeship schemes are an appropriate way to help create a proper skills pool for the future of Wales's heritage.

Unfortunately, the existing apprenticeship system only provides training in new construction. This impacts solely the part of the industry that concerned with new buildings. But works to existing buildings is estimated to be 50% of the construction industry's work, a proportion that is probably on the increase.

Without a properly trained workforce Wales risks inappropriate maintenance and other works to its historic and traditional buildings. The unnecessarily shortened lifespan of

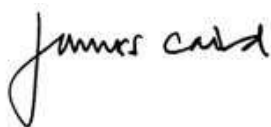
the stock existing buildings through inappropriate maintenance is not be good for the economy or the health and well being of buildings' owners and occupants.

Decisions on workforce skills should be based on both the need for new development and the needs of the existing stock and not just on the narrower interests expressed by the building industry through its larger firms. For this reason we urge the Committee to provide for what buildings and heritage require and not merely what the industry thinks it requires.

A recent Ofsted report in England<sup>1</sup> concluded that apprentices were more likely to succeed if they had undertaken meaningful work experience as well as formal courses. For this reason we urge that the this philosophy be adopted in Wales.

We hope, therefore, that the Committee's report will specifically refer to traditional building craft skills and support their inclusion in future workplace based apprenticeship programmes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Caid". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/apprentices-more-likely-succeed-if-they-have-completed-meaningful-work-experience>