



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

Joseph Johnson MP  
Minister of State for Universities and Science  
Department for Business Innovation and Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0ET

22 December 2015

Dear Minister,

We welcome the Government's pledge to support scientific research, as expressed in the recent Comprehensive Spending Review. The true strength of the Government's efforts will ultimately be judged by the level of new ambition in the commitments made to the UK Research Councils and this is a critical moment for investment in research infrastructure. We, the Heritage Science Group of the UK Institute for Conservation, are writing as the grassroots organisation to urge BIS to enable the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) or whomsoever the Government decides is the appropriate channel, to allocate an appropriate budget to develop a national distributed heritage science research infrastructure. We would like to support this request with the following arguments:

- In 2012, BIS consulted the science sector on the development of the Government's plan for a world-class science and research infrastructure as set out in the capital roadmap. Joint response between the AHRC/EPSRC Science and Heritage Programme representing 140 individual researchers and the National Heritage Science Forum representing 16 member institutions was put forward. The estimated cost to deliver this vision for integrated equipment, services and data management was £40m. The arguments to support a dedicated, distributed heritage science infrastructure have not changed and have therefore become more urgent.
- The RCUK Report *Capital Infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2012) identified UK leadership in heritage science and the important emerging need to take advantage of recent developments in handheld, portable and transportable, micro-destructive, non-destructive and non-invasive scientific analytical equipment. It is of extraordinary importance that this leadership is maintained, given the value of cultural heritage services to the UK economy.
- In your Department's consultation on *Creating the Future: A 2020 Vision for Science Research*, Heritage Science infrastructure was identified as a Capital Project for delivery by RCUK. This included a capital investment in equipment, establishment of Centres for Heritage Science Studies as well as mobile facilities. We strongly support this proposal.

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A reduction of research activities in publicly funded higher education and heritage institutions could have disastrous consequences for the capacity of the heritage science sector and maintenance of the cultural heritage resource. Access to new heritage science facilities, shared between higher education and heritage institutions needs to be enabled and enhanced. Therefore, to allow for the required growth of this sector, we urge you to consider allocating a sustainable level of investment for capital heritage science funding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alison Richmond', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Matija Strlic', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Matija Strlic, ICON Heritage Science Group, Chair