HistBEKE Focus Group Workshops: Summary Report

February 2018

1   Introduction

The HistBEKE project has been developed to create a research agenda and framework for the Historic Built Environment, and aims to

- enhance decision-making processes through wider access to current knowledge;
- set an agenda for further knowledge enhancement to enable more effective management and decision-making; and
- establish a sustainable and collaborative network to maintain the framework into the future.

From September to November 2017 seven focus group events were held across England to discuss the potential of the HistBEKE framework and to gather suggestions and recommendations for how it could be structured and what it may cover, including knowledge gaps identified by those working in the sector. The focus group workshops built on information gathered by a baseline survey carried out in the Summer of 2017, and provided an opportunity to discuss how a knowledge exchange framework for the built historic environment might work in practice.

This summary report provides an overview of the aims, objectives and methodology for the workshops, as well as an outline of the discussion topics, recommendations and knowledge gaps identified by workshop attendees. It concludes by restating the key recommendations made by attendees, and briefly discusses how these will be taken forward.

2   Aims and Objectives

A key aim of the focus group workshops was to find out from those across the built heritage sector what they would like the framework to both look like and include, how they might use it, and where the key knowledge gaps are that can be translated onto a research agenda. These follow on from the Summer 2017 baseline survey, making use of the knowledge gaps and suggestions already made within that. These workshops, along with the summer 2017 survey and a follow-up Spring 2018 survey will allow a wide range of voices and perspectives (from across the whole heritage sector) to be brought together to inform the development of the framework so that it is meaningful and operable to all.

This process will recognise and acknowledge the cognate but distinct emphases and theoretical and practical traditions within and between disciplines. In particular, it will seek to integrate the key groups of actors within built environment management, conservation and research whilst respecting that differences in approach and perceived importance of various factors may remain.

The objectives of the focus group workshops in particular, were to:

- further identify levels of awareness of research frameworks within the built historic environment sector;
- discover whether research frameworks are used within the built historic environment sector, and if not to identify the impediments to their use;
- discuss how the HistBEKE research framework could be developed to minimise any identified impediments, and thus provide benefits to the built historic environment sector.
- identify any areas commonly identified by the sector as under-researched;
- discover areas of current research / projects currently being undertaken.

3   Methodology

Seven regional focus group workshops were organised to bring together a comprehensive representation of stakeholder groups from across the historic built environment sector. Suggestions for locations were made by Summer 2017 Survey participants, and by the full project team including Historic England representatives. These were as follows: York (15th Sept); London (29th Sept); Birmingham (13th Oct); Manchester (27th Oct); Newcastle (10th Nov); Bristol (24th Nov); London (29th Nov).

3.1   Audience, Promotion and Advertising

A key aim of the workshops was to hear from people across all disciplines working with or in the built historic environment in England. Details of the workshops and how to book a place were therefore sent to:

- All contacts previously gathered for the Summer 2017 survey
- All contacts on the dedicated HistBEKE mailing list
- Historic England Local Engagement Advisers, with a request to send it on to their local authority contacts
- National organisations such as National Amenity Societies, the National Trust, the Institute for Historic Buildings Conservation (IHBC) and other special interest groups, such as the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Builings Archaeology Group. The details sent included a request to forward the information on to colleagues or any members who may be interested in attending
- Architectural studies or buildings archaeology departments at Universities within the local area
- A number of specific individuals identified by the project team.

The workshops were further promoted through news items, which included details of how to book, that were sent to national organisations or posted on Jiscmail forums such as Arch-History (Architectural History), and the HERForum (Historic Environment Record Forum). A blog article was also posted on the HistBEKE website with an overview of the workshops' aims and objectives and details of how to book, and the 'Get Involved!' page included links to the booking pages for each workshop. In addition, other forms of social media, including Twitter, were regularly used to promote both the workshops in general and each specific event.

3.2   Workshop Design and Delivery

The workshops were delivered largely as Open Space sessions, with topics for discussion being suggested on the day by attendees. Following an introduction to the project, attendees were split into two groups for an initial discussion session set by the project team to discover whether attendees currently use research frameworks, and their thoughts on how HistBEKE may be structured to take into account any impediments to their use. During this session the project team grouped together suggestions made by delegates into four topics/themes which were then discussed in two further sessions. Attendees were able to choose which of the two topics in each session they wished to discuss and could move to another group if they wished. Although the programme was the same at each workshop, therefore, they have all been different in terms of what was discussed.

In the first four workshops, on arrival delegates were directed to flip chart sheets with the following questions and asked to add suggestions / discussion topics to them using post-it notes:

- What would you like to see on the research agenda for historic buildings?
- What do you need/want from a research framework for historic buildings?

- Is there anything else that you would like to discuss?

Short descriptions of each Research Framework element were also placed on display close to the flip chart sheets (fig.1).
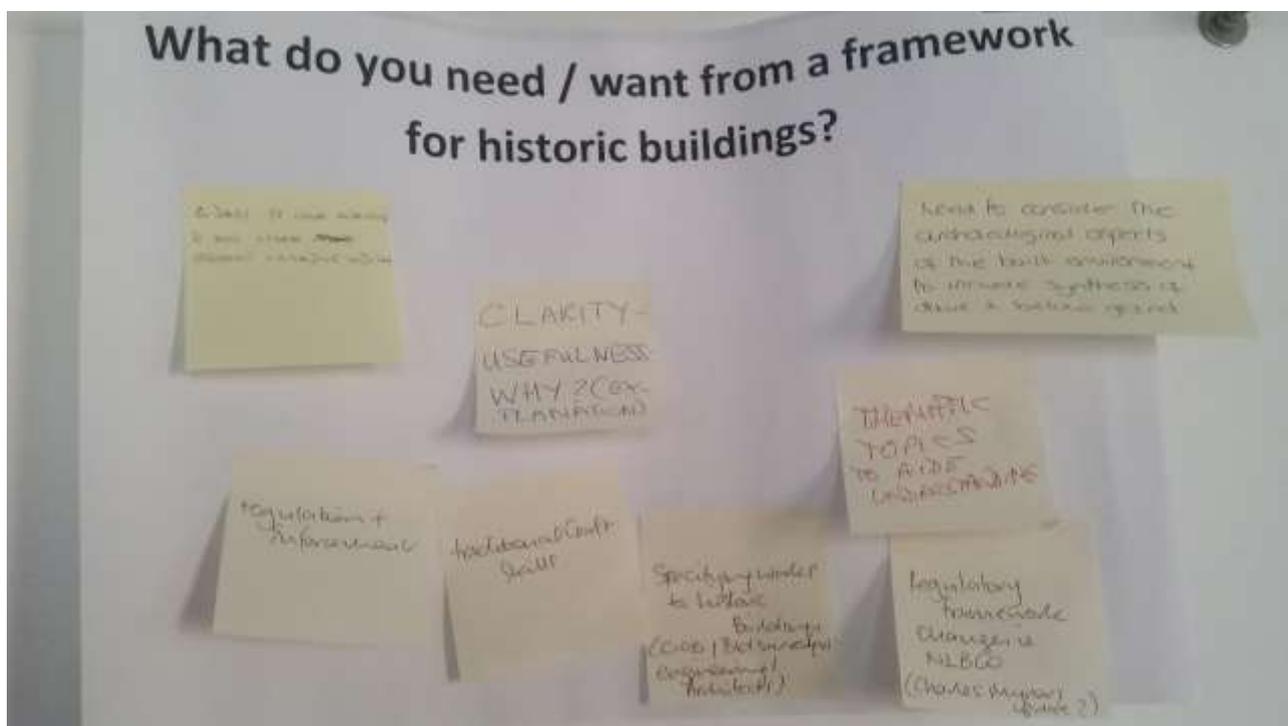

Figure 1 Post-it note suggestions at the Manchester workshop

Many of the delegates, however, had not previously experienced an open space style focus group and there were fewer suggestions made for discussion topics than the project team had expected. Evaluation of this methodology resulted in the final three workshops using a set of more specific questions, and allocating ten minutes prior to the first discussion session specifically for delegates to add their suggestions (Fig. 2 and 3). The questions were:

- In your experience, what are the key knowledge gaps for historic buildings?
- What sort of research questions might we include on the HistBEKE agenda?
- Is there anything else that you would like to discuss?

An outline of research framework elements was also provided as in the first four sessions, along with copies of the categorisation table that the project team are using to categorise a review of recent literature (available here: https://histbeke.org/project_documents/). A link to this document was also provided to all delegates prior to each workshop as part of the 'joining instructions'.
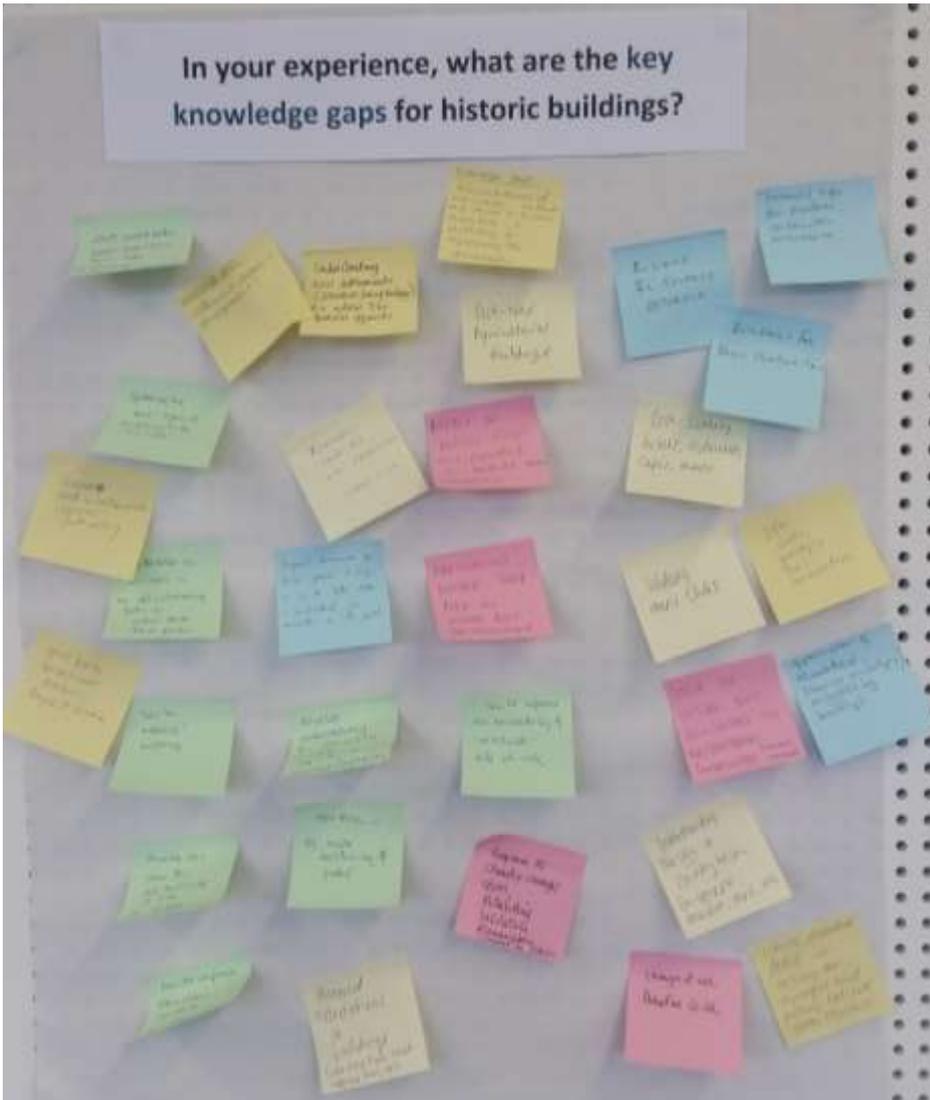
Figure 2 Revised flip chart questions at the 29th Nov London Workshop

Figure 3 Bristol workshop attendees adding suggestions to flip charts

3.3 Recording

During the discussion sessions, flip charts were used by attendees to record key thoughts and recommendations both for inclusion within this summary and to aide their reporting back at the end of each session. Audio recording was also used to ensure that all relevant thoughts and suggestions made within each session were captured. All suggestions, knowledge gaps and other comments were then transcribed onto a spreadsheet by the project's research assistant, with similar comments and suggestions being grouped together and the number of workshops at which the same/similar comment was made being recorded.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Everyone over the age of 18 with an interest in the historic built environment was eligible to take part in the workshops. Participation was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any time.

Apart from names and email address gathered as part of the booking process, no personal information has been recorded or used in this analysis, and no individual can be associated with any of the comments recorded and held by the project team. In compliance with data protection regulations, all email addresses will be deleted at the end of the project in August 2018, and the project's Eventbright account, where these details were collected, will also be deleted.

Although audio-recording of proceedings was undertaken to assist with taking notes. Once relevant information has been transcribed these recordings will be destroyed. No personal or identifying information has been transcribed.

4 Results

4.1 Attendees

A key target audience for the focus group workshops was those who work in Local Authorities in a planning or conservation officer role, as well as those who undertake other reactive historic buildings work such as contractors, consultants and conservation architects. This group should benefit the most from the outcomes of the HistBEKE project, both in terms of access to and exchange of information, and in utilising the results of research projects identified by the but heritage sector as a 'knowledge gap'.

Contact details for Local Authority historic buildings officers are often difficult to find, unlike county or unitary authority archaeological curators and HER officers, who are all listed on the Heritage Gateway and regularly meet at HER Forum meetings with an active associated mailing list. However, by publicizing the events widely across a number of platforms, and asking HER officers to forward invites to their Local Authority colleagues, a good number of this target audience was reached (fig.1). Consultants/contractors and Local Authority or HER officers were, in fact, the two highest attendee types.
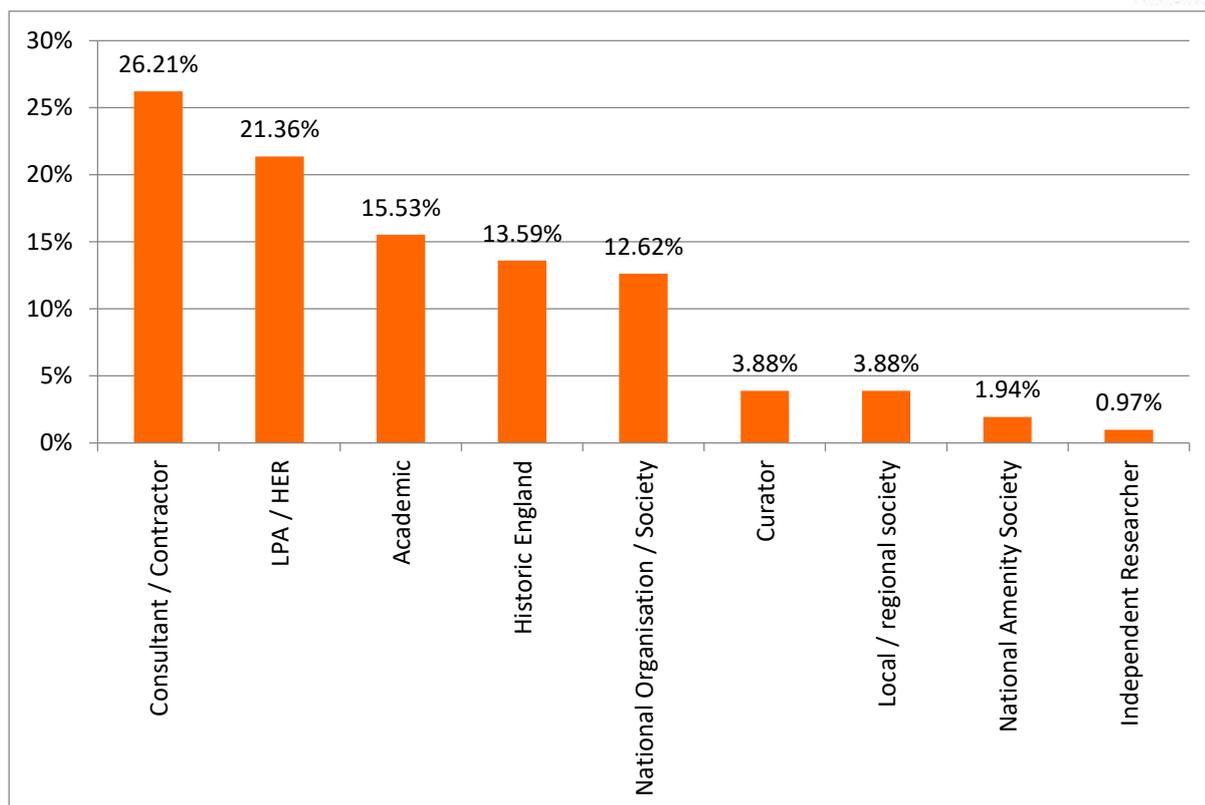
Figure 4 HistBEKE Workshop Bookings: Attendee Type

The third highest attendees were those from academic institutions. This was achieved through a number of specific invites sent to course directors, as well as more general invitations sent to nearby university departments. Attendance by this group ensured healthy debate between delegates in terms of what may or may not be feasible in relation to filling knowledge gaps, and opened up discussion and potential collaboration between delegates when thinking about how to create a framework that would work for everyone in the sector.

Another key audience was the National Amenity societies and large heritage organisations such as the National Trust, IHBC and the Heritage Alliance. However, although all national amenity societies were invited and most responded with interest and a request to be kept informed of progress, only the CBA was able to send representatives to the workshops. National Trust representatives and members of the IHBC, along with a number of representatives from other national organisations/societies also attended, although professional body affiliations were not recorded as part of the booking process.

4.2   Discussion: Aims, purposes and structure

At each workshop there was a significant amount of discussion devoted to how the HistBEKE framework might look, what it might do, and who would use it and why. The majority of attendees advised that they do not currently use research frameworks, many having had no previous experience of them. This was especially the case for consultants/contractors and Local Authority Conservation Officers. Those from an academic institutions suggested, however, that although they did not use regional research frameworks, they often work to very similar documents.

A key area of discussion at all workshops focused around whether or not the HistBEKE agenda would provide access to information to be able to exchange knowledge, or if it was an attempt to embed research

into reactive buildings/conservation casework for which time and other resources would be a limiting factor. This resulted in an overarching recommendation that there should be two main elements to HistBEKE:

1. A Knowledge Exchange – a 'one-stop-shop' website that anyone can access for information on building types, conservation techniques, craft skills, materials etc. This should be a Google-style search engine which will provide links/signposts to resources, and should be a wiki-style page that is open access so that anyone can update it.

2. A research agenda and strategy to fill identified knowledge gaps and thus add to the knowledge exchange above. This should be managed by a network/forum/stakeholder group rather than an open access wiki, but with the opportunity for others to submit suggestions for consideration by the group.

In addition to this, there were a number of common areas of discussion across all workshops. These focused on the use of research frameworks, associated impediments to their use, and the potential of the HistBEKE agenda. These are outlined below.

4.2.1   Use of Frameworks

Comment	Frequency[i]
General experience is that current frameworks are not used or referred to, especially in reactive planning work.	7
They are not seen as essential for built heritage work, just a nice added extra if resources allow, unless there is a link to a funding application. They are also considered to be more for archaeology.	3
Regional Research Frameworks are not widely used in academia or by local groups. The voluntary sector are not often involved - resistance of local groups to using frameworks perhaps because they are unsure of their relevance?	2
Research frameworks can help to prove justifications in planning	1
They are the first place to look for information	1
Research frameworks are used to help us focus where we can make the most impact when we can't record everything	1
Research frameworks can inform planning conditions, but we need to balance the desire for new knowledge with the developer's bottom line, explaining why it is necessary (i.e. 'you are contributing to …')	1
Regional Research Frameworks are a resource for community groups undertaking local listing projects	1
There are two dimensions to the use of frameworks - knowledge building and policy/decision-making	1
Research Frameworks could/do provide research for neighbourhood planning	1

4.2.2   Impediments to Using Research Frameworks

Comment	Frequency[i]
Frameworks are quickly out of date and don't cover buildings in detail	3
There is a lack of integration between the Art historical and archaeological approaches - a gap in philosophy between archaeologists and conservation officers	3

Comment / Recommendation	Frequency[i]
Frameworks are viewed as an academic pursuit by consultants and those in planning teams where heritage management is often reactive and thus 'on the backfoot' in terms of commissioning research.	2
Professional approach puts off voluntary sector	2
There may be an issue of the scale/scope of the resource being overwhelming - 'historic built environment' is a vast subject and very broad spectrum	2
Frameworks are not tied in to listing (local and National) and conservation casework	2
There is too much information in regional research frameworks, which makes them difficult to use	1
People may not know that they exist, frameworks need to be promoted to a wider audience	1

4.2.3 The Potential of HistBEKE

Comment / Recommendation	Frequency[i]
Some of these topics and issues are research gaps, but some are just not signposted (personal gaps)	2
There is a need for more knowledge/consistency in submitted documentation (planning applications etc). The framework could assist with this.	1
HistBEKE may help HER officers to work better with conservators	1
Exchange of current and recent research is needed to ensure that we're not 'reinventing the wheel'	1
HistBEKE may help to identify 'trends' in research	1
HistBEKE may help to identify future heritage assets	1
HistBEKE may help to inspire a network of historic built environment professionals	1
HistBEKE could assist in a major sites approach	1
Would HLF take note? HistBEKE could provide research coordination	1
How does a framework help to bridge the gap between academic work and professional 'usefulness'?	1
HistBEKE may begin the process of democratising information held by building specialists	1

4.2.4 Other / not specific to research frameworks

Comment	Frequency[i]
Timeframes are an issue for historic buildings casework – an appraisal usually postdates planning, which contrasts with archaeology where the assessment comes first. The built environment needs to be the same.	1
How relevant is all of this for historic building conservation?	1
Frustration – Conservation Officers often don't include a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) within approvals/planning conditions, no consistent briefs, scope too narrow	1
Local Further Education colleges do not include heritage skills in their courses, resulting in damage due to good quality but inappropriate work	1
The HistBEKE project team should consult with those involved in the archaeological research framework process to gain 'lessons learned'	1
Participatory frameworks are susceptible to manipulation	1
How can conservation, architectural history, buildings history, buildings archaeology and so on be integrated?	1

More training is required to enable the sector to adequately facilitate, create and use frameworks	1

4.3 Discussion: knowledge gaps

In contrast to the discussion topics above and the recommendations listed below many of the knowledge gaps identified by focus group attendees, especially those for building types, were mentioned at just one of the workshops. This reflects the multidisciplinary backgrounds of the attendees and the range of organisations or societies that they are affiliated with. For example, the Birmingham workshop had an attendee from the National Society of Master Thatchers but the other workshops did not; and likewise the nationally-focused Council for British Archaeology sent two representatives to the York workshop (where the society is located) but those who attended the Manchester workshop had a more local or regional focus.

In addition to specific building type or thematic knowledge gaps, discussion at many of the workshops included issues and suggestions related to research resources and access to information. These have been included here as they directly relate to knowledge gaps, but they are not in themselves a topic which necessarily requires additional research.

4.3.1 Discussion: Research Resources

Comment	Frequency[i]
There is ignorance about what exists and where - information is not being used that could be. HistBEKE should look for solutions to the issues of 'lost' research such as MA dissertations, HLF reports, heritage statements, card-based building records/archives, and research undertaken for a specific case and then held by the commissioning organisation or developer.	6
Access to information is an issue - commercial developers often withhold reports, and there can be difficulty in accessing records for housing (original plans etc). Access to / digitisation of building control plans (held by the Local Authority) would be helpful.	4
We need to consider the issue of knowledge held in memories rather than written down and published.	2
HistBEKE should be linked to National, European & international connections/frameworks	2
How do we know what sort of research Universities, voluntary groups & even the professional sector is doing?	2
We need to ensure interdisciplinary working with e.g. institute of civil engineers; institute of engineering & technology; structural engineers; cultural geographers; building surveyors; architects; planners; church organ society & bells; religious organisations; and the decorative arts - paint, glass, wall-paper etc	2
It should be a requirement of planning approval to upload heritage statements/appraisals/reports to OASIS, which will then feed into the Framework via OASIS+ (www.oasis.ac.uk)	1
Some buildings do not easily fall into a specific category, but they may have important features. How do we ensure that they are adequately assessed?	1
Research needs to have context for its inclusion in the knowledge exchange / bibliography (why was it done?)	1
Research questions need to be established at the outset of all investigative projects, and	1

research outputs should identify the significance of the research	
Useful information or records that it would be beneficial to have access to include: archives; discussion/minutes associated with legal records; architectural drawings; planning control system documents (enormous volume of 'lost' information); local authority decisions and drawings.	1
Research is often undertaken as a response to a threat, especially for those assets that are not well-represented on the list	1
Do not ignore traditional routes of exchanging knowledge such as journal articles	1
Development Management cases and HER records are often the source material for academic research (or can be)	1
Case law is useful and should be exchanged more easily, especially for setting and other issues such as health etc	1
When assessing the 'typical' researchers need to be aware of local variations as well as national patterns, e.g. C19th terraced housing	1
When should repair & maintenance be recorded, and where should this record go?	1
OASIS could provide a valuable resource and fill a specific need	1
HistBEKE should consult Historic England inspectors / conservation officers to find out where the gaps are RE threat response	1
The heritage sector is still playing catch-up with intangible/theoretical and multi-disciplinary learning	1

4.3.2   Building Types

Identified Gap	Frequency
20th Century industrial heritage, including industrial estates	3
Makeshift housing / hovels	2
Workers' buildings - housing / institutes / clubs	2
20th Century hotels, restaurants, cafés, motels etc	1
Boundary features	1
Buildings associated with the labour movement, women's suffrage, and others pushing for social change	1
Buildings for scientific research	1
Buildings resulting from Interwar town planning	1
Business parks	1
Castles	1
Chapels	1
Coal / mining heritage	1
Cooling towers / grain dryers and their re-use	1
Dual-use buildings that combine dwelling and workplace - 'work-homes'	1
Electricity power generation	1
Expanded towns	1
Farm buildings	1
Housing Association buildings and Local Authority housing	1
Medieval abbeys, priories and parish churches	1
Museums	1

Nuclear power	1
Oddfellows Movement (and similar) – housing, insurance, mutual societies/clubs	1
Petrol stations	1
Post-medieval prisons	1
Small buildings	1
Telephone exchanges	1
Terracotta facades	1
Theatres, cinemas and entertainment buildings	1
Transport – tube stations, train stations, bus garages, 19th century urban horse transport buildings	1
Urban and rural building types - differences / similarities	1
Utilities and infrastructure	1
Water management structures (eg dams) and infrastructure	1

4.3.3 Thematic Topics

Identified Gap	Frequency[i]
Significance	7
Change in use / adaptive re-use / new use / regeneration	4
Non-designated heritage and assessing the significance of the 'typical'	4
Building Information Management (BIM) - what role for heritage?	3
Buildings which are at risk either now or potentially in the future, and how to predict this	3
Conservation philosophy and balancing interests - conservation / preservation / sustainability	3
Craft skills	3
Historical associations / social history of buildings and the people who lived in or used them, including building alterations made by inhabitants	3
Responses to climate change, including flooding and increased rainfall	3
Asset disposal	2
Damp and the importance of maintenance	2
Fire safety / planning	2
International impacts on building construction and design, e.g. war, immigration, and in particular buildings associated with colonialism (banks, country houses, town houses etc)	2
New and alternative survey techniques, e.g. laser scanning, drones, 3D modelling	2
Regulatory framework for historic buildings	2
Research results on energy efficiency in historic buildings	2
Retro-fit – what's happening, what's working and what isn't working	2
Townscape character / assemblages of buildings / setting and landscapes / curtilage	2
Upstanding archaeology and the value of buildings as archaeological resources rather than as aesthetic objects in a townscape or Conservation Area	2
Asset management	1
Communal value	1
Economic value of heritage assets	1
Emerging funding mechanisms such as social investment	1

Historic use of earth plaster (non-lime based)	1
Impact of World War Two	1
Innovation in building methods/materials	1
Intangible heritage	1
Integrated management of the diversity of building types in historic cities	1
Interiors, including fixtures and fittings, e.g. theatres, industrial, domestic	1
Lime	1
Local Architects who are little-researched	1
Local Listing - more research needs to be done to assess which building have national significance	1
Marginalised heritage	1
Modern construction techniques	1
Non-traditional building materials for late 19th to early 20th century buildings	1
Past and present changes (extension/alteration) to commercial/retail buildings	1
Regional surveys of character and importance	1
Semantics of non-aesthetic construction	1
Sources and identification of traditional building materials, e.g. stone, brick, mortars etc.	1
The impact of architectural 'fashion' on building design and modification	1
The long term results of conservation repairs	1
The National / local interface in building design	1

4.4 Recommendations

In addition to general discussion about the use and potential of research frameworks, and the knowledge gaps that an agenda for the built historic environment might help to fill, a large number of specific suggestions were made by workshop attendees. These translate into recommendations for the HistBEKE framework and are split into three themes: the purposes and aims of HistBEKE; the content and functionality of HistBEKE; and the presentation and design of the web platform. Another theme which became clear whilst preparing this summary is recommendations relating to the management of HistBEKE. Some of these suggestions were made at all seven workshops, with the key recommendations that had agreement by all participants being:

- The knowledge exchange should provide a 'one-stop-shop' for all information on the built historic environment (recent research, current projects, guidance, publications etc)

- It should be user-friendly – easy, simple and clear

- It must be kept current / up-to-date and responsive to new research using a wiki-style web platform (with a dated record of changes)

- It should include links to MA and PhD thesis archives / repositories

- As a separate element to the knowledge exchange, a research agenda/framework should be provided for setting research questions and strategies (see Section 4.2 above)

- The knowledge exchange should act like a gateway, providing links / signposts to information, rather than providing information itself

All recommendations, including these, are listed below underneath each individual theme.

4.4.1 Purposes and Aims

Recommendation	Frequency[i]
The knowledge exchange should provide a 'one-stop-shop' for all information on the built historic environment (recent research, current projects, guidance, publications etc)	7
As a separate element to the knowledge exchange, a research agenda/framework should be provided for setting research questions and strategies	7
The 'sector' and the community (including volunteers and societies) should lead the agenda	3
Through the inclusion of current research projects, HistBEKE should help to link groups and organisations who may be undertaking similar work which will in turn provide opportunities for potential partnerships	3
The boundaries should be clearly defined. A definition of 'built historic environment' would be beneficial	3
Knowledge exchange is the desired result with shared information / knowledge as the 'goal'	3
The purpose of HistBEKE should be clearly stated on the home page	2
HistBEKE should be an aide to prioritising decision-making	1

4.4.2 Content and Functionality

Recommendation	Frequency[i]
It should include links to MA and PhD thesis archives/repositories	7
An agreed thesaurus linked to existing thesauri should underpin the framework	5
HistBEKE should be organised around thematic topics, such as HE Listing guides and/or Heritage 2020 themes	4
HistBEKE should include a contacts section which is managed by users (you can choose to add your own contact details and information about areas of expertise)	4
HistBEKE should include discussion boards/forums, and an opportunity to suggest new research questions	4
It should provide a platform for heritage statements to be more easily available	3
The categorisation table/thesaurus should include funders under 'Agents'	3
The research agenda should include priorities/themes for research rather than specific research questions, but should be non-prescriptive so that it doesn't restrict research to just a few key priorities	3
Details of future, current and recent research should be provided, along with contacts for the organisations involved	2
It should include links to all existing research frameworks (national & regional) so that they are in one central, accessible location	2
Links to GIS, land-use, Ordnance Survey, and DEFRA maps, as well as similar databases should be included	2
The agenda should include questions that force the researcher to cross disciplines and widen the scope of study	2
The framework should have an holistic approach, including the full historic environment rather than individual, stand-alone, special subject frameworks	2
The Heritage Gateway should be developed to do a lot of the exchange work RE projects and contractor/organisation details etc	2
The knowledge exchange should include/signpost to best practice examples, e.g. for writing	2

Recommendation	
heritage statements	
The knowledge exchange should indicate the existence of archival records via links to gateways such as that provided by The National Archives	2
It should include a user-generated events section to list conferences and other events that may be of interest to the wider community	1
It should include non-text outputs such as films, digital, Virtual Reality etc	1
Links to existing listed building resources, such as selection guides, should be included	1
There should be the opportunity to flag gaps identified at development management (DM) level, such as a HistBEKE forum for DM officers	1

4.4.3   Presentation and Design

Recommendation	Frequency[i]
It should be user-friendly – easy, simple and clear	7
It must be kept current / up-to-date and responsive to new research using a wiki-style web platform (with a dated record of changes)	7
The name should be changed	7
The knowledge exchange should act like a gateway, providing links / signposts to information, rather than providing information itself.	7
The knowledge exchange should be accessible to all audiences, with no log-in required	4
Copyright and access issues (for heritage statements, appraisals etc) need to be considered and caveats provided if applicable	4
It should allow regular updates with new information / research questions (a 'living', iterative, document)	4
It should have a simple, Google-style search which is flexible as well as an advanced search option and perhaps a map-based search	3
It should show if and how research questions have been answered, and which questions are outstanding	3
HistBEKE should be a relational database	1
The web pages need to have pictures	1

4.4.4   Management

Recommendation	Frequency[i]
Specialist panels/forums should meet to discuss and agree updates for the research agenda, and a peer review process should be defined	5
Input should be moderated, especially for the research agenda	4
If a search for a particular topic is executed over a certain number of times within the knowledge exchange it should become a 'research question' within the agenda	2
The multidisplinary implementation of the framework nationally needs to be carefully considered	2
The project should partner with special interest groups and organisations such as CIfA, IHBC and ALGAO to assess gaps and develop longer-reach bibliographies, as well as to enhance guidance on historic building resources and character studies.	2
Everyone has to know about the framework – planners should have it on their desk and use	1

it at validation; consultants should use it as best practice. It's got to be something that is not easily dropped.	
Guidance for local architects may be needed on how to scope and frame their assessment and recording conditions to take into account the research framework	1
HistBEKE should be tried and tested by an external super-user group before being rolled out	1
There should be a link to HistBEKE on the websites of all national heritage organisation such as IHBC and CIfA	1
Use the Heritage Alliance as a network for helping to maintain and promote HistBEKE	1

4.5   Delegate feedback

Delegates were asked to complete a short feedback form at the end of each workshop. In addition to standard questions about the venue and catering, the form asked attendees how strongly they agreed with the following statements:

1. I have a better understanding of research and knowledge exchange frameworks

2. I have been able to contribute towards the development of the HistBEKE framework

3. A framework for the built historic environment will be of benefit to the sector

The results of this feedback show a very positive attitude towards the project and it's potential benefit for the sector, with attendees consistently agreeing or strongly agreeing to all of these statements, and only a very few being neutral. In particular, 90% of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that following the workshop they had a better understanding of research and knowledge exchange frameworks (Fig. 5). However, it is worth noting that only a few attendees had previously worked with research frameworks in the past, many having had no experience of them. Further training or guidance on how to use them, therefore, was one of the suggestions listed above in Sections 4.2.4 and 4.4.4.
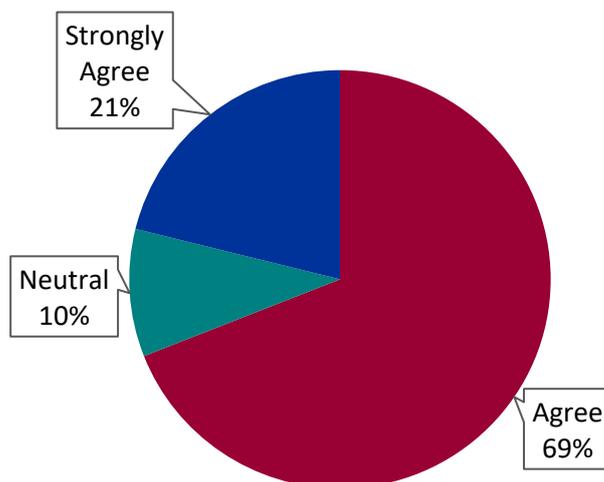

Figure 5 Feedback: How strongly attendees agree that they have a better understanding of research and knowledge exchange frameworks

That HistBEKE will be of benefit to the built historic environment sector was also agreed or strongly agreed to by 93% of attendees (Fig. 6), suggesting that the framework that is developed will be positively received and taken on board within the sector.
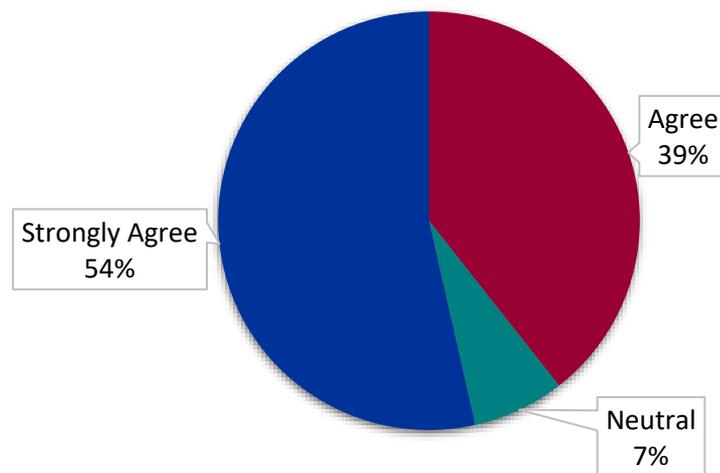
Figure 6 Feedback: How strongly attendees agree that a framework for the built historic environment will be of benefit to the sector

5 Summary and Next Steps

In summary, the workshops have given a wide range of people and organisations from across a number of disciplines the chance to come together to discuss the potential of the HistBEKE framework, and to make recommendations for its design, content and functionality. Rather than the framework providing only a traditional research agenda and strategy, attendees were overwhelmingly in favour of HistBEKE having two key elements:

1. A Knowledge Exchange – a wiki-style webpage that anyone can access for links to information on all aspects of the built historic environment via a Google-style search.

2. A research agenda and strategy to fill identified knowledge gaps managed by a network, forum, or stakeholder group, rather than an open access wiki, but with the opportunity for anyone to suggest questions.

Expanding on this, there were 6 key recommendations that were made by attendees at all seven workshops, which are:

- The knowledge exchange should provide a 'one-stop-shop' for all information on the built historic environment (recent research, current projects, guidance, publications etc)

- It should be user-friendly – easy, simple and clear

- It must be kept current / up-to-date and responsive to new research using a wiki-style web platform (with a dated record of changes)

- It should include links to MA and PhD thesis archives / repositories

- As a separate element to the knowledge exchange, a research agenda/framework should be provided for setting research questions and strategies (see Section 4.2 above)

- The knowledge exchange should act like a gateway, providing links / signposts to information, rather than providing information itself

In addition, the majority of workshop attendees suggested that the name should be changed, although there was no agreement on what the name should be, with many suggestions being made at each workshop.

5.1   Next steps

The project team would be grateful for your feedback on this summary, particularly in relation to the recommendations and identified knowledge gaps. If you would like to make any comments on these, or the project in general, please send them to Stella Jackson (stella.jackson@liverpool.ac.uk), or get in touch with us via Twitter on @HistBEKE.

The results of the seven focus groups workshops detailed above, along with the those of the Summer 2017 survey, will form the basis of the recommendations that the project team make for the development of the framework. Before these are finalised, however, they will be consulted on as part of a follow-up survey in the Spring of 2018, and the final recommendations following this will also be available as a draft document for comment via our website before being confirmed and submitted to Historic England.

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[i] The number of workshops at which this comment/recommendation/knowledge gap was made