

Institution: Leeds Beckett University		
Unit of Assessment: 28, History		
Title of case study: Sexualities, History and Heritage: Bringing LGBTQ Heritage into the Mainstream		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007-19		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Professor Alison Oram	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Social and Cultural History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2007-19
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-21		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Before 2015 very few heritage sites in Britain referenced their LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) histories in their interpretation. Oram's leadership of the Historic England consultancy project "Pride of Place: England's LGBTQ Heritage" (2015-16) set the pace in shifting the policy and practice of national bodies and actively engaged thousands of people in identifying and preserving LGBTQ heritage . As a result of this project, Historic England committed itself to embedding a greater diversity of histories into the properties it manages, an approach which was subsequently endorsed by central government and other public bodies.		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) The case study builds on Oram's extensive research into LGBTQ history of twentieth century Britain and its focus on how the heritage sector represents sexuality and gender. Oram is a pioneer in the social and cultural history of lesbianism in Britain, revealing the changing representation of women's cross-dressing in popular culture, especially in popular press stories and variety theatre, and its contribution to the emerging concepts of lesbianism and transsexuality in twentieth-century Britain (3.1, 3.4). Over the past decade Oram's research has focused on the heritage industry's representation of sexuality and gender, especially queer history. Her recent publications discuss how the themes of sexuality and the family appear in public history, primarily in historic houses (3.2, 3.3, 3.5). Oram's research revealed that historic house interpretation in Britain hitherto reflected dominant heterosexual family narratives about aristocracy, class and lineage in order to conform to a traditional image of national identity (3.2, 3.3). Curators and custodians determined which aspects of a house or family's history were suitable for visitor consumption based on heteronormative values, and by extension, many aspects of historical difference were left out. Interpretation and information boards reinforce traditional identities around family and heterosexual reproduction. With a few exceptions, the queer histories of historic houses were withheld from visitor identification. Oram's research demonstrated the diverse ways in which ideas about same-sex love were presented in sites including Sissinghurst (Kent), Shibden Hall (West Yorkshire) and Plas Newydd (the home of the "Ladies of Llangollen" in Wales). For example, Oram demonstrated the ways that queer women used their domestic studies as a private space in which they were able to produce (through writing journals or novels reflecting on same-sex love) their identities and challenge heteronormative values that regarded the private study as a traditional male and heterosexual space (3.5).		

Oram recommended that curators and custodians of historic houses challenge the privileged position of heterosexuality in our society by revealing the evidence of queer lives in their properties. This brought her research to the attention of Historic England, the government agency responsible for the historic environment, which has increasingly sought to promote “under-represented heritage” in its work since the 2000s. Oram disseminated her research to its regional staff groups and served as a panel member on its wide-ranging 2012 consultancy on Under-Represented Heritage.

In 2015 Oram won a competitive bidding process for Stages 1 and 2 of Historic England’s LGBT Heritage project, subsequently named “Pride of Place: England’s LGBTQ Heritage”. She led a team of between 4 and 10 people between 2015 and 2016 whose purpose was to advise Historic England on curatorial practice in various properties and the wider organisation. This was the largest social history project on under-represented heritage commissioned by Historic England to that date. It also successfully trialled innovative methods of generating heritage knowledge from the general public using crowd-sourcing methods, which revealed a huge public appetite for queer history and support for extending its commitment to improving the inclusion of under-represented heritage in historic houses.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

3.1 Oram, Alison (2007), *“Her Husband was a Woman!” Women’s Gender-Crossing and Modern British Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.

3.2 Oram, Alison (2011), ‘Going on an outing: the historic house and queer public history’, *Rethinking History*, vol 15, no 2, pp. 189-207.

3.3 Oram, Alison (2012), ‘Sexuality in Heterotopia: Time, space and love between women in the historic house’, *Women’s History Review*, vol 21, no 4, pp. 533-551.

3.4 Oram, Alison (2016), “‘Woman as Husband’”: Gender, sexuality and humour in the *News of the World* 1912-1950s’, in Brake, Laurel, Kaul, Chandrika, and Turner, Mark W. (eds.), *‘Journalism for the Rich, Journalism for the Poor’: The News of the World and the British Press, 1843-2011*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 159-178.

3.5 Oram, Alison (2017), ‘A queer study,’ in Cook, Matt and Gorman-Murray, Andrew (eds.), *Queering the Interior*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 208-225.

Details of research grants:

Alison Oram (Principal Investigator).

‘Pride of Place: LGBT Histories and Heritage’.

Grant Number 7160.

English Heritage/Historic England.

2015-16.

£68395.30.

Oram’s research is **significant and original** because it uncovers the systemic omissions of queer identities from public history narratives; its **rigour** is evidence by its basis in archival research and the peer review processes through which it has passed prior to publication.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Changes to National Policy

Before 2015, LGBTQ history was featured at very few historic sites and not recognised at all by national heritage bodies. New official policy explaining the significance of LGBTQ heritage was written by the Pride of Place team and adopted by Historic England (HE) in 2015. The official endorsement of LGBTQ heritage by central government and charitable bodies protected existing sites of heritage, whilst also recognising the importance of involving diverse communities in decision-making regarding the designation of historic sites.

At the project's launch in September 2016, the Government's Minister for Sport, Heritage and Tourism, Tracey Crouch, praised the project for its role in recognising the diversity of 'communities that have influenced and shaped our history' and credited the team's efforts in ensuring that 'so many buildings with such a rich history have received the important protection that they deserve.' By embracing diversity, claimed the Chief Executive of HE, Duncan Wilson, Pride of Place took HE 'one step on the road to better understanding just what a diverse nation we are, and have been for many centuries' (5.1).

Preserving LGBTQ Heritage

Pride of Place achieved 22 new and amended listings of nationally protected sites on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), to better reflect their significance to LGBTQ history. These sites, which are spread across the country, were selected from a longer list of 34 recommended sites, demonstrating a 69% uptake in new or amended listings. Publicly announced by HE in September 2016 and July 2017, these formed the first official recognition of LGBTQ heritage in the built environment. The Pride of Place team wrote paragraphs on the relevant history for the listing descriptions, which are publicly available on the [NHLE website and contribute to a greater diversity of histories being made available for protected sites](#) (5.3).

In September 2016, HE approved 1 new and 5 amended listings for sites of national interest, attracting considerable national and international media attention. These included the grave of writer, musician and Egyptologist Amelia Edwards, the London home of Oscar Wilde and the house where Benjamin Britten lived with his partner, the tenor Peter Pears (5.1, 5.3, 5.4).

A further 2 new and 14 amended listings were announced in July 2017, from a list of 20 recommendations (80%), to mark the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality. This list included a coastal retreat shared by the artists, Judith Ackland and Mary Stella Edwards, a chapel exhibiting a stained-glass window created by artist and suffragette, Mary Lowndes, and the homes of major cultural figures including Vita Sackville-West, Hannah Gluckstein and Lytton Strachey (5.2).

Taking LGBTQ Heritage into the Mainstream

Pride of Place left a lasting impact on LGBTQ heritage by taking it into the mainstream of heritage through its public and professional partnerships. In addition to an extensive social media programme, managed via a website hosted by HE, the project mobilised both the general public and specialist historians and archivists to engage with LGBTQ heritage on a crowd-sourced map (5.5, 5.6). A Pinning Party toolkit was produced for use by LGBTQ groups to organise pinning parties while the project team organised 5 parties across the country. Some of the pinning parties were directed at hard-to-reach groups, including older and ethnic minority LGBT people, adding to the diversity of the map content. Its rationale was to make use of people's everyday heritage alongside traditional sources in order to engage the public in co-producing historical content. By August 2016 the number of views of the map had reached 64,151, while approximately 1,600 places had been pinned; it currently stands at 2,046 pinned places, which demonstrates the project's legacy.

The project raised the profile of under-represented heritage by working in partnership with what novelist Sarah Waters calls 'a mainstream organisation like Historic England' (5.7). To fulfil its objective of 'mainstreaming' concepts of LGBTQ heritage into the everyday processes of HE, project members wrote a guide, glossary of terms, historical timeline and reading list. These were subsequently adopted as part of HE's desk instructions when considering sites for national listing and are also available for use in local listing decisions (e.g. 5.8).

Shortlisted for the Historic England Angel Awards in the category of Best Research Project in 2016, Pride of Place has had a positive impact on heritage policymaking and practice, at national and local levels. This is revealed in Oram's subsequent collaboration with the National Trust on its 2017 'Prejudice and Pride' theme (5.9) as well as with Pride of Place being identified as a model of best practice in applied research (5.10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Historic England (21 September 2016), 'England's Queer History Recognised, Recorded and Celebrated': <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/england-queer-history-recognised-recorded-celebrated/>.
- 5.2 Historic England (25 July 2017), 'Places with Queer Histories Listed to Mark 50th Anniversary of the Partial Decriminalisation of Homosexuality': <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/places-with-queer-histories-listed/>.
- 5.3 22 listings available on the National Heritage List for England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>.
- 5.4 Chan, Sewell (23 September 2016), 6 Sites Recognized by Britain for Significance to Gay History', *The New York Times*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/24/world/europe/uk-lgbt-history.html>.
- 5.5 Pride of Place website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/lgbtq-heritage-project/>.
- 5.6 Pride of Place Crowd-sourced map, including number of places pinned and number of views: <https://www.historypin.org/en/prideofplace/>.
- 5.7 Bromwich, Kathryn (22 May 2016), 'On my radar: Sarah Waters's cultural highlights', *The Guardian*: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/may/22/on-my-radar-sarah-waters-cultural-highlights>.
- 5.8 Bengry, Justin, Bevan, Robert and Morrice, Richard (2016), *A Guide to Understanding and Protecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Heritage*, London: Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/pride-of-place-guide-to-understanding-protecting-lgbtq-heritage/pride-of-place/>. (See also uploaded evidence)
- 5.9 Oram, Alison and Cook, Matt (2017), *Prejudice and Pride: Celebrating LGBTQ heritage*, Swindon: National Trust. (See uploaded evidence)
- 5.10 Oram, Alison (2018), 'Pride of Place: Valuing, mapping and curating queer heritage,' in Sandell, Richard, Lennon, Rachael and Smith, Matt (eds.), *Prejudice and Pride: LGBTQ heritage and its contemporary implications*. Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (See uploaded evidence)