

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCE OF WALES**  
**that was read at the American Friends of the Georgian Group's**  
**award ceremony upon acceptance of the award for service to architecture**  
**18 September 2013**



**CLARENCE HOUSE**

As Patron of the Georgian Group, I am most touched and honoured to accept the Annual Preservation Award from the American Friends of the Georgian Group. Needless to say, I am so sorry that I cannot be with you this evening to accept this marvellous award and can only hope you will forgive the fact that other commitments prevent me from being with you on such an important occasion.

We are extraordinarily lucky to have a huge number of wonderful heritage buildings which lie at the heart of local communities, but which so often are left vacant, derelict or under-used. These buildings are often built to the highest architectural standards from local materials and with careful skill and craftsmanship. I strongly believe that with a little imagination and determination they can once again become assets to the communities in which they sit, serving a new purpose, creating job opportunities and providing a focus for community regeneration.

In rebuilding economies and communities, heritage is a vital asset. It was for this reason that I first established my Regeneration Trust and its predecessor organizations some sixteen years ago, to endeavour to save unique heritage buildings and re-use them in creative and sustainable ways. I also founded my Foundation for Building Community, which is committed to sensitive urban planning and design in a manner which reflects local identity and character.

I am extremely proud of everything that my Regeneration Trust has achieved, from its first project at Stanley Mills, in Scotland, where a derelict complex of water-powered cotton mills was brought back to life, through to its most recent project at Middleport Pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, which houses the last working Victorian pottery in the country. These projects have saved and created jobs in areas of deprivation, acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration in the area and saved buildings of historical importance.

As you may know, six years ago, along with a consortium of Charities, I acquired Dumfries House, a unique 18th-century house in East Ayrshire, situated in a deprived part of South West Scotland. From the start, we intended not only to save the house and its contents and open it for visitors, but also to use it as a catalyst for regeneration in this severely depressed, former coal-mining region. Jobs have been created on the Estate by opening the House for tours and events, running a café and food academy and hosting teaching and conference facilities, as well as providing skills training in various fields. I can only describe this virtuous circle as "heritage-led regeneration" and I am proud, delighted and grateful that this award recognizes the importance of this approach.

I hope that you all have a most enjoyable evening.

HRH The Prince of Wales