Heritage Statement Guidance

Information requirements for applications affecting Heritage Assets
(Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Parks &
Gardens/Designed Landscapes, Battlefields and Maritime Wrecks)

Most development affecting heritage assets needs planning permission or special consent. This helps the Council to manage change to the historic environment for the benefit of the public.

Since the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) any application affecting heritage assets needs to include an assessment of the significance of the asset and its setting. This statement should also consider the impact the proposed development may have on the significance of the heritage asset.

When is a Heritage Statement required?

A heritage statement is required for all applications affecting listed buildings, unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas or locally listed buildings, including applications affecting the setting of any of the above.

Heritage Statement as part of a Design & Access Statement

For most types of applications in Conservation Areas a Design & Access Statement is needed, including those for extensions or alterations to a single dwelling (ie householder applications). Where this is the case, the Heritage Statement could be included as part of the explanation and justification for the design approach. For small-scale changes to the external appearance of buildings in Conservation Areas, access issues may not be relevant and the statement can say so.

What information should a Heritage Statement include?

The scope and complexity of a Heritage Statement will vary, depending on the extent of the proposals and the importance of the building. Larger development proposals that include demolition and new-build in a Conservation Area will require a more in-depth approach than, for example, the replacement of a boundary wall or a front door. For most applications the Heritage Statement will include the following components:

1) A description of the heritage asset and its setting

The following may be considered:

- Which conservation area does the building form part of?
- What is the age of the building?
- What are the main characteristics in terms of style, building materials and architectural features, eg window type?
- What is the surrounding development of the area like? Is the building part of a development of the same age and style, perhaps by the same builder?
- Describe the street scene: Is it of residential or commercial character? Is there variety or coherence in building form and types? Is it suburban, eg are there front gardens to the buildings?

2) An assessment of significance

The following may be considered:

- How does the building contribute to the historic character of the area?
- Is it one of a kind? Is it part of a group of buildings of similar style and age? Is it one of a pair of semi-detached, or part of a terrace in which the single house forms a unit within a larger entity?
• Are there any distinctive architectural features?
• How does the setting contribute to the character and appearance of the asset?

3) An explanation of the design concept for the proposed development

- For small scale alterations: What are the design and proposed materials?
- For extensions to buildings or proposals for new development: What is the amount of development, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance (eg building materials and architectural detail)?

In all cases the Heritage Statement should inform the design of the development proposal.

4) Describing the impact of the proposed development

The following may be considered:
- Would the proposed development be visible from any public viewpoint?
- Would the proposed development involve loss or change to any original features?
- For extensions and new build: What would be the impact on the appearance, character and setting of the building?
- For small scale alterations: If not a like-for-like replacement – what would be the visual impact? Would it preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the building and streetscene?
- For all developments: What is the harm and has this been justified? Have alternative solutions been considered?

5) Photographs

Annotated photographs of the building illustrating it in context, its exterior and interior should be included. For more complex proposals photographs should be cross-referenced to plans and drawings.

The heritage statement should clearly show that you have considered all the relevant issues and sought to preserve the special significance of the building or the special character of the area affected. Information on any sources and expertise that has been consulted should also be provided.

Sources

• The National Heritage List for England is the official database which provides access to up to date information on all nationally designated heritage assets. It can be accessed here.

• Conservation Area Appraisals are available for many of the County’s Conservation Areas. They give an understanding of what the area’s special interest is and highlight features that positively contribute to its character. These can be accessed here.

• The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3) sets out guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes. It can be accessed here.

• Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England Advice Note 12) provides information on the analysis and assessment of heritage significance in line with the NPPF to assist owners, applicants, local planning authorities and consultants in implementing historic environment legislation, the policy in the NPPF and the related PPG. It can be accessed here.

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