

# **DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 15 (PPS 15): Planning for the Historic Environment**

## **English Heritage Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide**

### **Policies:**

#### **Plan Making Policies:**

##### **Policy HE1: The evidence base for plan making.**

Historic Environment Records should be available as evidence to assess the significance of heritage assets throughout the area.

All local authorities will have access to one of 82 Historic Environment Records (HER) (usually via the Heritage Gateway project – [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk) - however the Lancashire HER is not available. Yet.) Other national environmental data sets include [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) Additionally local records should also be used – The Local List, sites of potential interest, historic characterisation reports, Village Design Statements and Parish Plans.

##### **Policy HE2: Regional planning approach.**

The historic environment should inform the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS should be consistent in its treatment of heritage a cross the region and should take account of the positive contribution of heritage to the area.

Consider how the historic environment contributes to the regional character and cultural identity of an area. Impetus for regeneration, increasing tourism, improved quality of life and sense of place, opportunities for reuse and adaptation of existing buildings rather than replacement. Such initiatives are best delivered via an integrated approach – area action plans and masterplanning.

Regional sources of information to facilitate the definition of the local historic environment include:

1. High-level characterisation studies;
2. Urban characterisation studies;
3. Other county based, unitary wide or national Park based data;
4. Regional strategies;
5. Other commissioned research at regional level.

##### **Policy HE3: Local planning approach.**

LPA's should set out a positive, proactive strategy for conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment – local distinctiveness leads to a sense of place. New buildings should be inspired by the historic environment and should be imaginative and of high quality design that harmonises and respects their setting.

Is the evidence base sufficient? Would identification of all heritage assets on the proposals map be beneficial? Would specific historic environment policies within the core strategy be beneficial? (Do not repeat or rephrase national or regional policy.)

#### **Policy HE4: Heritage assets and sustainable development.**

The reuse of historic assets can contribute to sustainable development. Adaptations of historic assets can be possible to make them more energy efficient and to make use of renewable energy if approached in a sympathetic manner.

LPA's might wish to produce Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for minor modifications to historic assets to improve environmental performance. They might produce sustainability appraisals of heritage assets at risk, celebrate best practice and achievements through design and conservation awards.

EH produce guidance on how heritage assets can be adapted without harming their significance.

Local Development Framework (LDF) policies can focus include the design of new developments in historic areas or adjacent to heritage assets. Guidance on this is available from EH and CABE.

#### **Policy HE5: Permitted development and Article 4 Directions.**

LPA's should consider the use of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights.

Would an Article 4 Direction protect the significance of a heritage asset? Conservation Areas in particular can benefit. Do costs outweigh benefits? Are benefits measurable?

#### **Policy HE6: Monitoring indicators.**

LPA's should consider how they could monitor the impact of their policies upon the historic environment – e.g. Buildings at risk.

Heritage at Risk information is a good indicator of the success of heritage protection policies. It can be included in the annual review of the LDF.

### **Development Management Process**

#### **Policy HE7: Pre-application discussions and assessment.**

There are clear benefits to early engagement – understanding significance is key.

If archaeology is involved, desk based investigations should be a pre-requisite of any planning application.

Early agreement of the level of historic significance between LPA and applicant can lessen the burden of the application process.

Pre-application discussions can help to:

1. Avoid conflict between conservation and planning issues;
2. Enhance significance;
3. Approve applications.

Establish significance **before** a proposal is designed.

Would a Heritage Partnership Agreement between owner and LPA be beneficial?

### **Policy HE8: Information requirements for validation of applications for consent affecting heritage assets.**

LPA's should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of their setting to that significance. It should include the information sources consulted and the expertise sought, which, as a minimum should include consultation of the relevant Historic Environment Record.

LPA's should not validate applications where the extent of the impact upon the significance of the heritage asset cannot be understood from the information provided by the applicant.

The amount of analysis and the level of detail will depend upon the nature of the application and the heritage assets affected – the potential impact upon significance.

### **Policy HE9: Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for development relating to all heritage assets.**

LPA's should identify and assess the significance of the heritage asset using appropriate expert advice and in consultation with the local community. They should take into account the desirability of enhancing the heritage asset and balance the benefits of proposals to mitigate against climate change with the harm done to the significance of the asset.

New developments should be sympathetic to heritage assets and should reinforce their distinctiveness, but at the same time LPA's should not stifle innovation. The public benefit of a proposal that would result in the loss of or damage to a historic asset should be weighed against the impact upon significance. Material harm to or removal of significance should not be accepted unless:

- ❖ Harm or removal is necessary to sustain the asset in use;
- ❖ The heritage asset impedes other use of the site, no viable alternative use is available or no grant funding is available for conservation of the asset;
- ❖ The material harm or removal is outweighed by wider social, economic and environmental benefits, including mitigating climate change.

Any deliberate neglect should be disregarded when considering such applications. Where loss or damage is accepted, the LPA should be satisfied that redevelopment would actually take place.

[A five-stage process:](#)

1. Identifying the heritage assets affected;
2. Understanding their significance;
3. Assessing the impact of the proposals upon that significance;
4. Resolving or minimising conflicts;
5. Weighing up the proposals.

**Policy HE10: Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for development related to designated heritage assets.**

Guiding principle: The greater the significance, the greater the presumption in favour of conservation. Loss of the assets of highest significance should be exceptional. Loss of any asset should only follow exploration of all possible alternatives and a period of appropriate marketing. Non-designated assets of historic interest should be treated in the same way as designated ones.

**Policy HE11: Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications affecting the setting of a heritage asset.**

LPA's should look to preserve the setting where it enhances the significance of heritage assets.

[A setting for a heritage asset can be positive, negative or neutral for the significance of that asset.](#)

[Setting is not fixed. For more help see document: 'The setting of historic assets: English Heritage Guidance'.](#)

**Policy HE12: Enabling development.**

- Will it harm the significance of the asset or its setting?
- Will it avoid detrimental fragmentation of management?
- Will it secure the assets long-term future?
- Is it necessary to resolve the needs of the asset rather than the owner?
- Are other sources of funding available?
- Is the level of development the minimum required to secure the asset and minimise harm to other public interests?

[See EH document 'Enabling development and the conservation of significant places'.](#)

**Policy HE13: Policy principles guiding the recording of information related to the historic environment.**

Historic Environment Records (HER's) are an invaluable resource that should be available to everyone. It furthers our understanding of our past. Recording an asset

that is about to be lost is particularly important. Recording must be a prerequisite before any significant change is made to an historic asset and should be enforceable by pre-commencement conditions to any permission granted.

HER's are a vital resource – there can never be too much information in an HER. Where new or additional recording is required it should be:

- Of high standard and to an appropriate level of detail
- Results are properly recorded
- The understanding gained is made publicly available.

A Written Scheme of Investigation will ensure these objectives are met, enforceable as a pre-commencement condition. A Written Scheme of Investigation is likely to include:

- Information from existing sources
- Site investigation
- Post-investigation examination of results, including publishing proposals
- Report on enhancement of understanding
- Report to HER summarising investigation and how disseminated
- Offer of deposition of site records to an appropriate recipient
- Record of known facts before investigation
- Wildlife considerations
- Research questions in relation to research frameworks
- Methodology
- Integrate site investigation results with ant pre-decision making investigation
- Professional standards of recording
- Experience and expertise
- Proposals for communication to and engagement with the local community
- Indicative timetable for completion.

## Further Guidance on Making Changes to Heritage Assets

### Categories of work to heritage assets:

	Landscapes	Buildings & Structures	Standing Remains	Buried Remains	Groups of or very large heritage assets	Marine Sites
Repairs & Restoration	Part of ongoing stewardship, usually small scale	Use like-for like historically accurate materials and techniques – maintain significance	Minimum intervention for repairs. Restoration less likely, unless significance will be enhanced.	Not likely to require repair or restoration. Conservation more probable.	Ensure consistency through heritage partnership agreements or conservation management plans.	Unlikely to be encountered except in exceptional cases – Mary Rose, Vasa for example.
Addition & Alteration	Very site specific – some cases where works will be more sensitive than others	Impact upon significance?	New works are likely to be rare, except where it would add to the sustainability of the heritage asset. Impact on significance can be considerable, so the level of care must be of equal quality.	New works are likely to be rare, except where it would add to the sustainability of the heritage asset. Impact on significance can be considerable, so the level of care must be of equal quality.	Very site specific – some cases where works will be more sensitive than others Impact upon significance?	New works are likely to be rare, except where it would add to the sustainability of the heritage asset. Impact on significance can be considerable, so the level of care must be of equal quality.
Works for research alone	Follow guidance on Written Scheme of Investigation. Balance of public benefit against loss of significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can investigation be non-destructive?</li> <li>Can understanding be found elsewhere?</li> <li>Likelihood of investigation yielding valuable information?</li> <li>Predicted rate of environmental decay?</li> </ul>	Follow guidance on Written Scheme of Investigation. Balance of public benefit against loss of significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can investigation be non-destructive?</li> <li>Can understanding be found elsewhere?</li> <li>Likelihood of investigation yielding valuable information?</li> <li>Predicted rate of environmental decay?</li> </ul>	Follow guidance on Written Scheme of Investigation. Balance of public benefit against loss of significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can investigation be non-destructive?</li> <li>Can understanding be found elsewhere?</li> <li>Likelihood of investigation yielding valuable information?</li> <li>Predicted rate of environmental decay?</li> </ul>	Follow guidance on Written Scheme of Investigation. Balance of public benefit against loss of significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can investigation be non-destructive?</li> <li>Can understanding be found elsewhere?</li> <li>Likelihood of investigation yielding valuable information?</li> <li>Predicted rate of environmental decay?</li> </ul>	Follow guidance on Written Scheme of Investigation. Balance of public benefit against loss of significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can investigation be non-destructive?</li> <li>Can understanding be found elsewhere?</li> <li>Likelihood of investigation yielding valuable information?</li> <li>Predicted rate of environmental decay?</li> </ul>	Follow guidance on Written Scheme of Investigation. Balance of public benefit against loss of significance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can investigation be non-destructive?</li> <li>Can understanding be found elsewhere?</li> <li>Likelihood of investigation yielding valuable information?</li> <li>Predicted rate of environmental decay?</li> </ul>

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