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Heritage statement guidance

Last Modified May 22, 2020



GUIDANCE ON THE PREPARATION OF HERITAGE STATEMENTS

Information requirements for applications affecting heritage assets

Conservation areas, listed buildings, locally listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, and archaeological remains are also known as heritage assets. Most development affecting heritage assets needs planning permission or consent. This helps the Council to manage change to the historic environment. Statements of significance, referred to in this guidance as Heritage Statements, became compulsory in March 2010 when PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment was published. This requirement was repeated within para. 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 which states that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”.

A heritage statement is, therefore, required for all applications affecting listed buildings, unlisted buildings in conservation areas, locally listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens, or affecting known archaeological sites. A heritage statement is also required for applications affecting the setting of any of the above.

What information should a heritage statement include?

The Heritage Statement can form part of a Design and Access Statement, but should contain sufficient detail to assess the history and character of the building, site or area and justify the proposed works in terms of their impact on the heritage asset. The statement should set out the significance of the asset and its setting, and should be detailed enough that the impact of the proposed works on the significance and setting can be properly assessed by the local planning authority.

The scope and complexity of a heritage statement will vary, however, 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 alteration of a boundary wall. Similarly, the scope and depth of information required for an application for listed building consent will be much more than for planning permission for works to a locally listed building.

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

As a minimum, applicants are expected to consult the Lancashire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) or Blackpool Local and Family History Centre at Central Library, Queen Street (tel: 01253 478095) for information on the history of the building, site or area. Historic Asset Record datasheets for locally listed buildings are available from the Built Heritage Team (telephone 01253 476332). In addition, the National Heritage List produced by Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> will give you information on listed buildings. The Core Strategy and Conservation Area Appraisals should be consulted where appropriate.

Heritage statements should ideally be prepared by an appropriate professional with the necessary expertise to assess properly the

heritage asset and its significance. For grade I and II* sites it is recommended that the statement be prepared by an architectural historian, an accredited conservation architect or qualified archaeologist. It is important that your statement is a balanced, evidence-based assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development, and should not simply express a personal view on whether the works should be approved.

Listed Buildings

The significance of the building should be assessed using the following list for guidance, which is not exhaustive. This should be followed by an explanation of the proposed works, methodology, and a description of the impact of the works on the significance of the building, together with any proposed mitigation.

- Age and history, describing its phases of development over time
- Description of its architecture and the layout of the site
- Internal features of special interest such as fireplaces, decorative plasterwork, staircases and other fixtures
- The role the site plays in the townscape
- The role the site plays in local, regional and national cultural history
- The use of the building, historically and currently
- Original architect or owner
- Visual qualities and characteristics of the building, including roofscape
- Design and materials
- Special external features of interest
- Potential for underground archaeological remains

Locally Listed Buildings

Blackpool's locally listed buildings have been assessed using the same criteria applied to statutorily listed buildings, and a brief heritage statement setting out significance, methodology and impact should be based, where appropriate, on the guidance given above for listed buildings.

Conservation Areas

The following should be included:

- Name and nature of the conservation area e.g. residential, commercial
- Age of the building, and its contribution to the character of the conservation area
- Is the building one of a kind or 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?
- Main characteristics of style, building materials and architectural features of the building itself, and the wider conservation area
- 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, architectural details and building materials?
- Describe the impact e.g. would the development be visible from any public viewpoint, would there be a loss of architectural features, what would be impact on the character of the building, and would it preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area?

Registered Parks and Gardens

One of the greatest threats to our historic landscapes, such as [Registered Parks and Gardens](#) and [Registered Battlefields](#), are proposals for development. Under the National Policy Framework their historic and architectural significance is taken into consideration as part of the planning process and carry the same weight as listed buildings. This means that substantial harm or loss can only be justified in exceptional cases.

Scheduled monuments and archaeological remains

There are no scheduled monuments in the Blackpool area. Development proposals which may affect buried remains will be determined in the best interests of the archaeology concerned, including all planning application sites being tested against the Lancashire Archaeological Service (LAS) map. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, developers will be required to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Useful websites

The National Heritage List <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>

The Heritage Gateway <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

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