

Guidance: What should be included in Heritage Statements for applications relating to designated and undesignated heritage assets?

Heritage Assets:

A Heritage Asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance that merits consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.

Heritage Assets include:

- scheduled ancient monuments
- listed buildings;
- conservation areas;
- historic parks and gardens;
- locally listed heritage assets
- other non-designated heritage assets (including archaeological sites)

Significance:

The archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic value derived from a heritage asset as a result of either its physical presence or setting.

Heritage statements:

Where an application relates to a heritage asset, or includes works within their setting, the National Planning Policy Framework requires that a Heritage Statement be submitted to accompany the application; describing the significance of any heritage assets affected and the details of any impact on the heritage asset or its setting.

All heritage assets are different and it can be difficult to decide what should be incorporated. The scope and degree of detail necessary will vary with each application and the level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and be no more than is needed to understand the potential impact of the proposal. However, in certain circumstances, such as sites of archaeological potential, additional expert assessment may be required. A heritage statement should include more than just a copy of the buildings listing description.

It is important that the Heritage Statement is used to inform the design process rather than be written as an afterthought after the design has been fixed.

If either the proposal or its impact is minor, a separate heritage statement is always preferred but not insisted upon where the necessary information is included in a Design and Access statement

(DAS) or the covering letter. However, if a separate Heritage Statement is not submitted, the information will need to be clearly signposted for the registration and assessment process.

In order for an application to be valid, the statement must cover all of the points listed below:

1. What heritage assets, including their setting, are potentially affected?
2. A thorough visual and physical analysis of the heritage asset, its setting and context, using the information obtained through the HER consultation.
3. Consideration of whether an expert assessment is required in order to gain the necessary level of understanding to inform the proposed works to the asset.
4. Identify the significance(s) of the heritage asset(s).
5. What impact will the proposals have on the significance of the heritage asset?
6. Will the proposals sustain, enhance or harm the significance of the heritage asset?
7. If the proposals will cause harm to the heritage asset, how do you propose to mitigate it and what would the public benefits be?

In addition, the NPPF requires the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER) to be consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. To help there are links to some online information and mapping at the end of this note.

The following items may be necessary depending on the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposed changes:

- a schedule of works
- photographs showing the site and its setting in general and the area of proposed change in detail;
- a statement of significance which demonstrates an understanding of the historical, archaeological, architectural and artistic interest of the site and in particular the significance of those areas affected by the proposed works.
- for particularly important sites of archaeological potential or older buildings, an archaeological assessment may be required.
- a specialist assessment where any features of special historic, archaeological, architectural and artistic interest may exist.
- a structural report which identifies defects and proposes remedies when works include significant elements of demolition or rebuilding.
- A written statement:
 - explaining why the works are proposed and identifying any public benefits
 - describing the significance of the asset with emphasis on the parts directly affected
 - assessing the impact of the works on the significance of the asset and explaining how the harm will be avoided or minimised

- Existing and proposed drawings (at an appropriate scale and where relevant):
 - a plan showing the site, its location, size, extent and context;
 - floor plans
 - any affected external and internal elevations
 - sections through affected floors, roof and walls
 - perspectives or photomontages or computer visualisations, to show the impact of new works on the heritage asset and its setting
 - landscape works, to include contours and planting schemes
 - any other material necessary to provide a full understanding of the impact of the works.

For applications relating to Grade I or II* Listed Buildings, Historic England and the Council should be contacted for advice prior to submitting an application in order to help identify the level of detail that may be required.

Further information

Guidance on statement of significance can be found on the Historic England website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/>

Information on Birmingham's heritage assets can be found at www.birmingham.gov.uk/conservation

Historic mapping of the Birmingham area can be found at www.birmingham.gov.uk/hlc

Contact details and information on the Birmingham Historic Environment Record can be found at: www.birmingham.gov.uk/her

To search Birmingham's archives and collections and for contact details for enquiries and visits go to www.birmingham.gov.uk/archives

To search the National Heritage List for England for listed buildings and scheduled monuments and for guidance on producing statements of significance go to <https://historicengland.org.uk/>