

LP19 - The Historic Environment

Policy background and explanation

- 15.28 Babergh and Mid Suffolk have a considerable wealth of historic settlements and buildings which contribute to the area's distinctiveness and make it an attractive place to live and work. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains statutory provisions relating to the management of the historic environment, however local authorities may develop policies through their local plans. The NPPF advocates that local plans should set out a positive approach to the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk.
- 15.29 Heritage Assets are defined by the NPPF as 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'. It includes nationally designated heritage assets, other non-designated heritage assets, Scheduled Monuments and sites of potential archaeological interest.
- 15.30 The designated heritage assets in Babergh and Mid Suffolk comprise of some 7,000 Listed Buildings, 60 Conservation Areas, 72 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 7 Registered Parks and Gardens. In addition, there are other buildings and features which make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the area. These may not be of sufficient quality to be designated as a heritage asset but are important in reinforcing a sense of local identity. An Historic Environment Record is maintained by SCC, which includes details of local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes.
- 15.31 Where heritage assets of archaeological interests are likely to be affected, a conservation strategy, including details of recording, mitigation, repair preservation, protection and management, as appropriate, will be required.
- 15.32 Some designated heritage assets are known to be at risk through neglect and decay, or are vulnerable to becoming so. The authorities will continue to monitor Heritage at Risk and will work with Historic England and other bodies to secure appropriate solutions.
- 15.33 In exceptional circumstances, permission may be granted for development which would not normally be acceptable in order to secure the long-term future of the designated asset. This is known as 'enabling development' and should only be carried out as a last resort in line with the guidance produced by Historic England. In such circumstances, the Councils will assess whether the benefits of a proposal, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies, but would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweighs the disbenefits of departing from plan policies.
- 15.34 Proposals which physically affect Scheduled Monuments require Scheduled Monument Consents in addition to any planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent required. Applications for Scheduled Monument Consents must be made to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport before any work may be carried out which might affect a monument either above or below ground level. Further

information on the application process for Scheduled Monument Consent is available on Historic England's website³⁰.

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- 1. Where an application potentially affects heritage assets, the Councils will require the applicant to submit a heritage statement that describes the significance of any heritage asset that is affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact.**
- 2. In addition, where an application potentially affects heritage assets of archaeological interest, the heritage statement must:**
 - a) Include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation by a suitably qualified person; and**
 - b) If relevant, demonstrate how preservation in situ of those archaeological assets can be achieved through the design of the development and safeguarding during construction.**
- 3. The Councils will:**
 - a. Support the re-use/ redevelopment of a heritage asset, including Heritage at Risk and assets outside settlement boundaries, where it would represent a viable use, and the proposal preserves the building, its setting and any features which form part of the building's special architectural or historic interest;**
 - b. Support development proposals that contribute to local distinctiveness, respecting the built form and scale of the heritage asset, through the use of appropriate design and materials;**
 - c. Support proposals to enhance the environmental performance of heritage assets, where the special characteristics of the heritage asset are safeguarded and a sensitive approach to design and specification ensures that the significance of the asset is sustained; and**
 - d. Take account of the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.**
- 4. In order to safeguard and enhance the historic environment, the Councils will have regard (or special regard consistent with the Councils' statutory duties) where appropriate to the historic environment and take account of the contribution any designated or non-designated heritage assets make to the character of the area and its sense of place. All designated and non-designated heritage assets must be preserved, enhanced or conserved in accordance with statutory tests³¹ and their significance, including consideration of any contribution made to that significance by their setting.**
- 5. When considering applications where a level of harm is identified to heritage assets (including historic landscapes) the Councils will consider the extent of**

³⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/consents/smc/>

³¹ Planning Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990, Sections 16, 66 and 72.

harm and significance of the asset in accordance with the relevant national policies. Harm to designated heritage assets (regardless of the level of harm) will require clear and convincing justification in line with the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6. Proposals which potentially affect heritage assets should have regard to all relevant Historic England Advice and Guidance.**
- 7. Where development is otherwise considered acceptable, planning conditions/obligations will be used to secure appropriate mitigation measures and if appropriate a programme of archaeological investigation, recording, reporting, archiving, publication, and community involvement; to advance public understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part); and to make this evidence and any archive generated publicly accessible.**