



Guidance Notes for Assessments of Significance for applications affecting Heritage Assets

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 requires applications affecting **Heritage Assets** to be accompanied by an "Assessment of Significance".

'Heritage Assets' are:

- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Battlefields
- Other non-designated sites and buildings of local architectural, historic or archaeological interest as determined by the local authority, such as non-listed farm buildings, chapels, archaeological sites and locally important historic parks and gardens.

This guidance note is designed to explain what information should be submitted as part of an Assessment of Significance, and where to find that information.

Why is an Assessment of Significance required?

The NPPF aims to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The intention of the assessment is to give an understanding of the nature, extent and importance of a heritage asset, so that the potential impact of change on its significance can

be properly judged, as well as to help inform successful design.

Applications submitted without an Assessment of Significance will not be validated.

What should be included in an Assessment of Significance include?

The information submitted should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset and no more than is needed to understand the potential impact on that significance, i.e. the more significant the asset the more information needs to be provided.

To assist with structuring an assessment a pro-forma has been produced to accompany these notes which can be used when submitting an application. The pro-forma is only intended as a guide and doesn't have to be used. Where a proposed change is minor an assessment might just be a short paragraph and could be included as part of a Design and Access Statement. For more significant proposals it might need to be a supplementary document with additional reports, studies, historic information, photographs and any other information where relevant.

The Conservation Team at South Kesteven can look at draft Assessments of Significance at the pre-application stage to advise on their adequacy, although we will not be able to contribute to the content. We can also advise at the pre-application stage whether a non-designated site or building would be considered a heritage asset for which an assessment would be required.

What is Significance?

Significance is defined in Annexe 2 of NPPF as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic."

As well as requesting general descriptive information about the heritage asset affected, we can ask for an assessment of significance of the site or building and its setting under more than one heading. However, for most applications it is likely that only some of these will be relevant. The headings are:

- **Historic significance** – this looks at the age and history of the asset, its development over time, the strength of its tie to a particular architectural or historic period, the layout of a site, the plan form of a building, internal features of special interest including chimneystacks and fireplaces, links to history such as an important architect/landscape designer or owner or more locally to such as a local industry or agriculture
- **Architectural and Artistic Significance** – this is the design and general aesthetics of a place, either from a particular architectural or garden design or from the way a place, garden or a building has evolved over time. It includes its visual qualities and characteristics, long views of it in the landscape, legibility of form, character of elevations, roofscape, materials, fabric, construction, craftsmanship, decoration and any specific artistic interest such as sculpture.
- **Archaeological significance** – mostly for sites of archaeological interest, this should look at the evolution of the monument, phases of development over different periods, important features, evidence in building fabric, potential for below ground remains and how it relates to its setting. It can also be relevant for conservation areas and historic parks and gardens where there is potential for archaeology beneath later phases of development.

To be able to address these considerations, and depending on the nature of the heritage asset, there may be a need to:

- look at the asset and its setting;
- undertake a desk-top and on-site analysis;
- consider whether an expert assessment or supplementary analysis is necessary (e.g. archaeological, structural analysis, architectural historian, social history, etc); It is important to remember that archaeological interest is not confined to below ground remains; an archaeological interpretive survey of a building can be key in understanding phases of development and the significance of features;

- Consider whether exploratory works are required to understand hidden layers of fabric

Listed Buildings

For substantial demolition of, an extension to, or removal of historic features such as windows, staircases, fireplaces or walls, it will be necessary to provide an assessment of the listed building as a whole. For a smaller alterations to a listed building, such as a new window or removal of a modern feature, it may only be necessary to provide an assessment of the affected part of the building. For development affecting the setting of a listed building, an assessment of the listed building as a whole and the value of its setting will be required.

Conservation Areas

For demolition of buildings and new development in a Conservation Area, such as a new house or a garage it will be necessary to provide an assessment of the part of the conservation area to be affected and the wider conservation area. For more minor works, such as an extension to a house it will be necessary to provide an assessment of only the part of the conservation area affected. For development affecting the setting of a conservation area it will be necessary to provide an assessment of the conservation area and the value of its setting.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

For development affecting a monument or its setting it will be necessary to provide an assessment of the monument as a whole and its setting.

Registered Parks and Gardens

For development affecting a registered park, or their setting, it will be necessary to providing an assessment of the park, garden and its setting.

Sites and buildings of local interest

For whole or substantial demolition, conversion or extension of a building or structure of local interest it will be necessary to provide an assessment of the building/structure in question. For development affecting the setting of a building or structure of local interest* it will be necessary to provide an assessment of the building or structure and the value of its setting. For development affecting the site of local

archaeological interest you would need to provide an assessment of the site as a whole and its setting.

Where can I get information for an Assessment of Significance?

There are a variety of sources that can help to find out and describe the significance of a Heritage Asset that is to be the subject of an application. They will not all be relevant to each case but include:

- **List descriptions for Listed Buildings.** Though these are often very brief and not always entirely accurate, they providing a starting point for understanding a listed building. It is important to note that List descriptions are for identification purposes only and are not to be considered as a list of features of interest. The statutory list entry for buildings anywhere in England can be viewed on-line: <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/>, for anywhere in Lincolnshire at: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/historic-environment-record/>
- **Scheduled Ancient Monuments.** Can again be viewed on-line via the above link to the English Heritage website or via the Historic Environment Record at Lincolnshire County Council, tel. 01522 552222.
- **National Amenity Societies (Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, Georgian Group, Victorian Society, Twentieth Century Society, Garden History Society).** These groups publish extensive material on their websites and in books and journals.
<http://www.spab.org.uk/>
<http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk/docs/home/index.php>
<http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/>
<http://www.c20society.org.uk/>
<http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/>

- **Conservation Area Appraisals.** These have been prepared for a number of Conservation Areas within the district, available on the Council's website at <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1657>
- **Local History and Civic Societies.** These exist in various towns and villages within South Kesteven and often have a wealth of local information.
- **Lincolnshire Gardens Trust.** For information on locally important gardens. <http://www.lincolnshiregardentrust.org.uk>
- **Historic title and OS maps and photographs.** Available at the Lincolnshire Archives, tel: 01522 782040, and on the Historic Environment Record at Lincolnshire County Council, tel: 01522 552222., or view on-line at:
Lincolnshire County Landscape Character Assessment. Available on the Lincolnshire County Council website at: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/historic-environment-record/>
- **Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER).** Maintained by Lincolnshire County Council. Tel 01522 552222 or on-line at: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/historic-environment-record/>
- **Lincolnshire Archive.** The Lincolnshire Archives was established as a county-wide service in 1948, bringing together of the records collected by the Lindsey, Kesteven and Holland County Councils, and the Lincoln Diocesan Record Office. The service is now part of Lincolnshire County Council's Economy & Culture department. <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/archives/about-the-archives/>
- **Lincs to the Past.** A site that contains hundreds of thousands of records

covering items held in Lincolnshire's Historic Environment Record, Archives, Libraries, Museums and Tennyson Research Centre.

www.lincstothepast.com

- **Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire** are the Council's Advisors on Archaeological Matters and they scrutinise planning applications to assess their impact on known and potential archaeological sites. They hold a wealth of information and produce publications to raise the awareness of the County's Archaeological assets.

www.lincsheritage.org/

Publications. There are many publications that describe typical building types and features of architectural periods, and locally relevant buildings and typologies. Some obvious texts, depending on the area concerned are:

The Buildings of England series (ed. N Pevsner) – Lincolnshire edition.

White's Lincolnshire 1856 (A Reprint of the 1856 issue of History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Lincolnshire)

Historic Farmsteads: East Midlands Region, by English Heritage.

Victoria County History: County of Lincolnshire.

The Making of Grantham (Heritage Lincolnshire 2011)

The Book of Grantham (Michael Honeybone 1980)

The Town of Stamford – An Inventory of Historical Monuments (RCHME 1977)

The Book of Stamford (Alan Rogers 1983)

Stamford Now and Then (Martin Smith 1992)

A History of Bourne (J.D. Birkbeck 1970)

Of course, this list cannot be exhaustive and the number of publications is too numerous to mention. Local libraries should not be overlooked

as sources of information as they contain quite a number of useful publications with old photographs and local histories of heritage assets in South Kesteven

What happens if an Assessment is not accepted?

If it is considered that the extent of the impact of the proposal on the significance of any heritage assets affected cannot adequately be understood from the application and supporting documents, including the assessment of significance, then the application will not be validated or determined.

In such cases we will write to you, explaining that further information will be required before the application can be validated, and it is your responsibility, as applicant/agent, to provide this information in order for the application to proceed. In some circumstances, an application that has been validated may subsequently be found by the planning case officer or conservation officer to be insufficient in the depth or extent of the description of significance and impacts, and in such cases the Council can require further information from the applicant before commencing to process the application.

If you have any enquiries about the preparation of Assessments of Significance, please contact the Council's Conservation Team:

Tel: 01476 406389/406472

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Or in writing at:

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