

Historic Environment Terminology

Archaeological Interest

An interest in carrying out an expert investigation at some point in the future into the evidence a heritage asset may hold of past human activity. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them. These heritage assets are part of a record of the past that begins with traces of early humans and continues to be created and destroyed.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

These are interests in the design and construction aesthetic value of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills like sculpture.

Article 4 Direction

An Article 4 Direction is made by a local planning authority and restricts the scope of permitted development rights either in relation to a particular area or site, or a particular type of development anywhere in the authority's area. Where an Article 4 Direction is in effect, a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted development. They are most commonly used to control minor works and alterations to properties that could threaten the character of an area of acknowledged importance, such as a designated Conservation Area.

Communal Value

Value deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or from whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Conservation

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance.

Conservation Area

An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. They are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Contribution

The part played by a heritage asset in adding special interest and value to an area.

Curtilage

In law, the curtilage of a house or dwelling is the land immediately surrounding it, including any closely associated buildings and structures, but excluding any associated open fields beyond.

Designated Heritage Asset

A building, place, landscape, etc identified through legislation such as, A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated as such.

Enabling Development

Development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring heritage benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved

Enhance

To improve a heritage asset or area, especially in value, or attractiveness. The significance of buildings or places, including its setting, can be enhanced by removing objects, buildings and development which impact upon it.

Heritage Asset (see also Local Heritage Asset)

A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making (including local listing) or through the plan-making process.

Historic Environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of the historic environment that hold significance are called heritage assets.

Historic Environment Record (HER)

Historic environment records are information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use. Typically, they comprise databases linked to a geographic information system (GIS), and associated reference material, together with a dedicated staffing resource.

Historic Fabric

The material substances which make up a historic asset, including the upstanding physical remains and the buried archaeological deposits.

Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide an emotional meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Local Heritage Asset

An inherited resource which has heritage significance that local people value and which contribute to local distinctiveness and a sense of place.

Local Planning Authority

The local government body, usually the planning department of the district or borough council, that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions for a particular area.

Material Consideration

This is a matter taken into account in making decisions on planning proposals. The impact of development on the significance of heritage is a material consideration.

Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA)

Identified by the local planning authority as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) set out by Central Government which guides planners and applicants to how development should be managed, including in the historic environment.

Permitted Development Rights

Permitted development rights allow property and landowners to perform certain types of development without needing to apply for planning permission.

Preserve

To maintain a heritage asset in its original or existing state, ensure no harm is caused to its value or significance

Rarity

A heritage asset that is not commonly found as a typology nationally, regionally, or locally. Can relate to building type, architectural style or construction method and sometimes associated with age. Local context may mean something is rare in a given area, but could be more common in other parts of the country.

Setting

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Significance

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.

Viable Use

An alternative use of a heritage asset that is economically feasible and capable of working successfully whilst causing the least harm to the significance of the asset.