



Lewes District Council

## **Appendix 3 – Statement of Heritage Significance**

### **Why is a Statement of Heritage Significance required?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 128) requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development, 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record (HER) should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Certain applications will therefore need to be supported by a 'Statement of Heritage Significance'.

### **What is a Statement of Heritage Significance?**

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change to their setting. You will need to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting as this will inform your ideas for a proposal and help justify the approach you have taken to the proposal within your application. This information will need to be contained within a Statement of Heritage Interest.

It is helpful to think of a Statement of Heritage Significance as the end result of a process.

Stage one of this process is an information gather exercise in which you will need to carry out an assessment and gain an understanding of a heritage asset prior to and perhaps during the initial formulation of a design proposal.

Stage two is to use this assessment and understanding of a heritage asset to inform the design proposal, carefully considering the impact that it will have on the heritage asset.

Stage three is to compile the Statement of Heritage Significance, clearly showing both stage one and two to justify the proposals impact on the heritage asset.

A poorly considered proposal is typically one where a scheme is imposed upon a heritage asset without carrying out this process and where a Statement of Heritage Significance is written retrospectively after the formulation of a proposal.

### **When are Statements of Heritage Significance required?**

A Statement of Heritage Significance is required with an application where a proposal affects a heritage asset or its setting, these include:

- A listed building and any curtilage listed building or their setting.
- A locally listed building or its setting.
- A conservation area or its setting.
- A site of archaeological interest or land adjoining.
- A registered park and garden or its setting.
- A Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting.
- A non-designated heritage asset or its setting.

Local Planning Authorities should not validate applications unless a clearly defined Statement of Heritage Significance is included as part of the application submission where heritage assets are involved. If the application also requires a Design & Access Statement, then the Statement of Heritage Significance may be included as part of the Design & Access Statement, but it should be clearly entitled as such. Please be aware that we will not validate the application without a Statement.

### **Where can information for a Statement of Heritage Significance be obtained?**

The level of information required to be submitted in a Statement of Heritage Significance will be dependant on the significance of the heritage asset and the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.

Information is only required to be proportionate to what is proposed. For example, for a substantial demolition it is reasonable to expect detailed information on the heritage asset as a whole and a thorough explanation of the impact. An application for a minor alteration to part of the heritage asset is likely only to require detailed information on the affected part of the heritage asset, along with a brief explanation of how the impacts relate to the significance of the asset as a whole.

Although there is no limit on the sources of information that might be consulted or the exercises that might be carried out to fulfil this requirement, the most common steps you might take are as follows. The first three steps will be undertaken in almost every case.

- Check the development plan, main local and national records including the Historic Environment Record, statutory and local lists, the Heritage Gateway, the National Monument Record, and other relevant sources of information that would provide an understanding of the history of the place and the value the asset holds for society.
- Examine the asset and its setting.
- Consider whether the nature of the affected significance requires an expert assessment to gain the necessary level of understanding.
- Consider whether there are any special techniques that need to be employed because of the type of asset.
- Seek advice on the best means of assessing the nature and extent of any archaeological interest from East Sussex County Council.
- Consider, in the case of certain buildings whether physical intervention, such as the removal of plaster, may be needed to reveal important details hidden behind later additions and alterations.
- Carry out additional assessment where the initial research has established an architectural, historic, artistic and/or archaeological interest but the extent, nature or importance of which needs to be established more clearly before safe decisions can be made about change to the site. This may require a desk-based assessment and/or on-site evaluation. Such may be necessary for all types of asset, including buildings, areas and wreck sites, where understanding of the asset's history and significance is incomplete. Where there is a need to commission an assessment or evaluation you are advised to discuss the scope of the work with the local planning authority in advance and to agree a written scheme of investigation, if necessary, before commencement.
- Consider, and if necessary confirm, with local planning authority whether any investigative work may itself require planning permission or other consent.

Engagement with the relevant local authority specialists can be particularly helpful to you in developing an understanding of significance and in identifying the level of information needed to support an application.

### **What should a Statement of Heritage Significance contain?**

#### **Listed Building Application**

For applications for listed building consent, a written statement supported by appropriate detailed plans and photographs should be submitted and include:

- An analysis of the significance of the listed building, the site and its setting, its character, the development of the building and any archaeology.
- A schedule of works to the listed building and the site.
- An assessment and justification of the impact of the proposals on the special interest of the building, its site and setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets together with any mitigation measures proposed.
- Where appropriate a structural survey.

## **Planning Applications**

For all other applications, such as planning applications, either related to or impacting on any heritage asset or their setting, a written statement, supported by appropriate detailed plans and photographs should be submitted and include:

- An analysis of the significance of the heritage asset, the site and its setting, to include plans showing historic features that exist on or adjacent to the application site, its character, the development of the building and any archaeology.
- An assessment and justification of the impact of the proposals on the heritage asset, its site and setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets together with any mitigation measures proposed. .
- Where appropriate, a structural survey.

## **Archaeology**

For applications affecting sites of archaeological interest, the statement should include:

- a desk-based archaeological assessment and an archaeological evaluation report in accordance with the NPPF. The assessment should address issues relating to archaeological investigation of the site initially based on existing published material and the preservation and/or recording of historic or archaeological importance.

You are advised to discuss what is required at an early stage of your proposal with the East Sussex County Council Archaeologist:

[county.archaeology@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:county.archaeology@eastsussex.gov.uk)

An application will not be validated unless it contains sufficient information to assess the impacts. Please note after an application is submitted the local planning authority may identify further areas where information or expert advice may be reasonably required. If an application is validated, but is subsequently found to be deficient either in the depth or extent of the description of significance and the impacts, further information may be required from you.

## **Further Information**

Chapter 12 of the NPPF - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment can be viewed at the following link:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/12-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/>

Planning Practice Guidance - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, offers further details of what you will need to provide. You can view the guidance at the following link:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/>

If you have any queries relating to the above or require pre-application advice over the extent of significance please contact: