

Technical Advice Note

Heritage Statements

About this Note

This leaflet is one of a series of non-statutory 'Standing Advice' statements produced by the council. They are not formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Documents but are intended to provide general advice to those applying for planning permission or listed building consent. They also aid the councils Development Management process by providing clear guidance on particular aspects of planning policy, design, heritage conservation or archaeology and by ensuring applicants and agents are informed of the information that may be needed to support applications affecting heritage assets. This note covers the following:

- What is a Heritage Statement?
- What is Significance?
- What is a Heritage Asset?
- Why is a Heritage Statement needed and when should it be submitted?
- What should a Heritage Statement contain?
- Writing your Heritage Statement
- Description of Heritage Significance
- Description of development
- Mitigation
- Where can I find out more about heritage assets and significance?

It should also be read alongside the Council's Core Strategy (adopted December 2013) and the Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (adopted November 2017).

What is a Heritage Statement?

A Heritage Statement is a document that describes the significance of any heritage asset(s) affected by a development proposal. A Heritage Statement is an important practical tool to guide an applicant in developing their proposals. As good practice, it should therefore be one of the first things that an applicant considers when beginning to formulate their development proposals. To comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), applicants are required to submit Heritage Statements in support of all planning and listed building consent applications affecting any heritage asset(s). This is to allow an informed assessment to be made of the likely impact of proposed works on the significance of the asset(s), including its setting.

What is Significance?

The NPPF defines significance 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. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

What is a Heritage Asset?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines a heritage asset 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. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas and Registered Battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority (locally listed buildings; locally registered parks and gardens; archaeological sites and buildings identified in the South Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record).

Why is a Heritage Statement needed and when should it be submitted?

The NPPF sets out the Government's policies on different aspects of spatial planning in England, including those relating to the conservation of the historic environment.

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, 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 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.." Paragraph 189, NPPF

An understanding of the significance and character of a Heritage Asset(s) will help owners, agents and/or architects when it comes to developing a sensitive scheme of alteration or new development. It will also help the council in assessing the potential impact (positive or negative) of any such proposal.

In accordance with the council's Planning Application Requirements List (<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-applications-planning/documents-to-submit-with-your-planning-application/>) a Heritage Statement is required to support applications for listed building consent and planning permission affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets.

This includes:

- Applications affecting a nationally or locally listed building (including applications for listed building consent)*
- Applications affecting a conservation area*

- Application affecting a registered Historic Battlefield*
- Applications affecting nationally and locally designated parks and gardens*
- Application affecting a Scheduled Monument*
- Applications affecting archaeological sites – including Scheduled Monuments*
- Applications affecting heritage assets with potential archaeological interest

*and their settings

Excludes: Change of Use, Advertisements and Householder applications unless adjoining or adjacent to a designated or non-designated heritage asset.

To meet the requirements of the NPPF we will require applications affecting heritage assets to be accompanied by a heritage statement before the application will be validated.

What should a Heritage Statement contain?

The amount of detail that is required in a Heritage Statement will vary according to the particular proposal. The statement should be proportionate in detail to the type of works being carried out. For example, a major scheme that affects several assets or involves substantial work to, or affecting the setting of, a heritage asset will require an extensive and professionally produced heritage statement. A small-scale scheme that has limited impacts will probably require a short statement. However, there are a number of basics that must be included in any heritage statement.

A Heritage Statement should always cover three main points:

1. A description of heritage significance – a description of the significance of the heritage asset or assets which may be affected by the proposed development, including their setting.
2. Description of development – a clear description of the proposed development and, in particular, details of those aspects of the work that are likely to affect the significance of the heritage asset(s) or their setting.
3. Mitigation – an explanation of what steps have been taken to avoid, minimise or mitigate any harm to the significance of the heritage asset(s).

In addition, a Heritage Statement might seek to set out the positive contribution that will be created from the development and how heritage assets can be incorporated into this.

Heritage Statements do not achieve their full purpose or value if they are prepared only between finalising plans and submitting them to the local planning authority. They should be prepared as early in the process as possible, so that they can help inform the development and ensure that the works are sympathetic to the character and special interest of the Heritage Asset(s).

Writing your Heritage Statement

The following explains in more detail what the council would expect within any Heritage Statement.

Description of Heritage Significance

There are two main points to cover:

1. What relevant heritage asset(s) will be affected by the proposal.
2. An explanation of why the heritage asset (or part there-of) is important.

It is recommended that your Heritage Statement considers the reason for the heritage asset being designated, how it has evolved or developed over time, and how certain features or its setting contribute to its character or significance. It may also discuss how particular parts of the asset affected by proposed works relate to its historical development or architectural interest. A proposal to remove an internal partition in a listed building, for example, would need to establish the age of the partition and the material used in its construction, and discuss how the partition may relate to the historic plan form of the building or contribute to the proportions and character of individual spaces. We would not need a full history of the previous occupants of the building.

For new development in a conservation area, the Heritage Statement should consider what gives the area its special character and distinctive appearance. For instance, it may look at the type and scale of buildings, how traditional materials are used, how buildings relate to the street and to one another, typical boundary treatments and the use of open space. An understanding of the significance and character of an area will assist the council in assessing the potential impact (positive or negative) of any proposal, including contemporary new development.

The assessment should be proportionate to the scope of the works.

Useful information to include in a Heritage Statement:

- Any available information from the local Historic Environment Record or County Records Office;
- An extract of the relevant designation record (i.e. list description; scheduled monument entry, conservation area appraisal)
- A set of high-quality photographs that show each feature of the heritage asset(s) affected by the proposed works and its surroundings. You may also have historic photos (or any image when the heritage asset(s) looked different) which should be included
- Information from historic Ordnance Survey, tithe or estate maps or previous architectural plans.

Description of development

This section should describe the proposals in detail and will explain what aspects of the proposed development are likely to affect the significance of the relevant heritage asset(s). For example, this section may discuss how an extension to a property would impact upon the character or appearance of a conservation area, how an alteration to a listed building would affect its architectural or historic interest, or how landscaping or trenching will affect buried archaeology.

If you are carrying out your own assessment of impact, you may find it useful to use the template provided in Appendix 1 as a starting point. This is a simplified way of describing the relevant aspects of the development, identifying the significance of the heritage asset(s), assessing the potential impact of the development and providing a written justification of the works and how the significance of the asset is to be protected. More detailed and extensive proposals affecting one or more heritage assets may require a professionally produced heritage statement.

Where appropriate, this section should include the following:

- A schedule, method statement and/or specification of proposed works to the heritage assets and/or its setting;
- A description of all ground works including all ancillary activity and landscaping, depth and extent of disturbance and impact on the water table.
- A statement of how the stability of the structure and adjoining structures and their weather protection is to be safeguarded during the works;
- Details of how any internal or external decorative features, finishes or joinery will be protected during the works.

Mitigation

This section should explain what steps have been taken to avoid, minimise or mitigate any harm to the significance of the heritage asset(s) and should consider the following:

- Minimal intervention and reversible works: Are all the works absolutely required for the proposed use or function? Can new work be designed so that it can easily be installed and removed at some later date without causing damage to significant building fabric or archaeological deposits?
- Alternative methods of development: examining whether other options exist to meet the development objectives. Could a less sensitive part of the building be used to accommodate a proposed use or function? Could a new building or extension be repositioned so it is less detrimental to the setting of an archaeological feature or historic building? Could alternative foundation designs be applied to minimise the impact to buried archaeological deposits?
- Sensitive design: examples include the installation of new services in a discreet manner so as not to compromise the qualities of a room, or skilfully designing an extension that takes account of the physical massing and scale in both the old and new work. Can archaeological remains be preserved as part of open spaces or integrated as part of innovative design?
- Choice of materials: the careful selection of construction materials for new and repair works can avoid both visual and longer-term structural harm to a building.
- Recording: where development may lead to architectural or archaeological features being obscured, damaged or destroyed, a record should be made in a manner appropriate to the heritage asset's importance and the impact. This might include photographic surveys, measured surveys or excavation. The findings should, where applicable, be published and deposited in a suitable public repository (in accordance with the NPPF). However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Identifying such approaches in your Heritage Statement would help us to understand your design approach and how it has been informed by an understanding of the asset's significance.

Where can I find out more about heritage assets and significance?

Websites

- National Heritage List for England www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/
- Gloucestershire Archives www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives
- Bristol Record Office www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-record-office
- National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
- The Historic England Archive <http://archive.historicengland.org.uk/>
- Conservation Area Appraisals www.southglos.gov.uk/conservationareas
- Historic England guidance www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/
- Institute of Field Archaeology www.archaeologists.net
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings www.spab.org.uk
- The Victorian Society www.victoriansociety.org.uk
- The Georgian Group www.georgiangroup.org.uk
- The 20th Century Society www.c20society.org.uk
- The Gardens Trust www.thegardenstrust.org/

Historic England Guidance (available from www.historicengland.org.uk)

- The Setting of Heritage Assets 2nd Edition (December 2017)
- Conservation Principles, Policy and Practice (Apr 2008)
- Understanding Historic Buildings (May 2016)
- Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments (April 2017)
- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

Contact:

Conservation Team

conservation@southglos.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Example 1: Listed Building - external alterations

Feature (list each element affected by the proposed works)

Ground floor sash window, front elevation.

Description

A 6 over 6 pane, single-glazed, vertically sliding, painted timber sash window. Window in serious disrepair, with extensive areas of rot to lower rails, glazing bars and cill. See photos.

Heritage significance

Believed to be an original 18th century window. Window matches other three sashes in same elevation but has had historic glass replaced with modern float glass over time. Design of window contributes to the architectural and historic interest of the building.

Proposed works

Complete replacement of window with identical single glazed sash. Timber to be hardwood as opposed to softwood to ensure longevity. All profiles and glazing bars to match existing. No horns are to be introduced. Sash box to be retained and re-corded. Cill to be replaced. Draught-proofing to be integrated into sashes to improve energy efficiency.

Justification & assessment of impact

Repair of window was investigated but extensive rot and decay meant that it was not viable. Replacement of window with an identical sash window will protect the character and appearance of the building. Draught-proofing will be unobtrusive and will not change appearance of window.

Example 2: Listed Building - Internal alteration

Feature

Internal partition on ground floor.

Description

A modern stud partition dividing the front lounge into two smaller rooms. Partition is constructed of softwood and plasterboard. See photo showing area of opening up and cornice passing through partition

Heritage significance

A modern partition inserted in the 1970's to divide the front room into two small bedrooms. The partition cuts across the historic cornice. Partition makes no contribution to the significance of the building and detracts from the character of the room.

Proposed works

Remove partition to reopen room to original proportions and expose original cornice.

Cill to be replaced. Draught-proofing to be integrated into sashes to improve energy efficiency.

Justification & assessment of impact

We would like to reopen the front room back up to its original size and expose the historic cornice. The existing partition detracts from the character and significance of the building and the works would improve the situation.

Example 3: Conservation Area

Feature

Unlisted 19th century, two storey terraced dwelling.

Description

The building is located on the High Street in the Marshfield Conservation Area.

Heritage significance

The area is described in the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal as.....(refer to the relevant appraisal - see link above)

The building makes a contribution to the character and appearance of the area by the use of materials and similar appearance to other properties in the area.

Proposed works

A single storey, stone built addition to rear of unlisted building in the Marshfield Conservation Area. Extension is to be constructed to match the materials of the main house.

Justification & assessment of impact

We would like to build an extension to the rear of the building to provide a larger kitchen and dining area with views over the garden. The extension will be sympathetic to the main house in terms of scale, design and massing and will not be visible from any public rights of way in the area. The materials have been chosen to match those used in the main house. A traditional pitched roof was selected for the design to tie in with the style of the neighbouring outbuildings.