

Statements of Significance and Impact of proposals on Heritage Assets.

Under PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment, all applications that affect a 'heritage asset' must include a 'statement of its significance' and the contribution its setting makes to that significance, together with an evaluation of the impact of any proposals on the significance of the asset.

This requirement applies to all 'heritage assets' including designated as well as undesignated assets. Designated heritage assets includes listed buildings, Conservation Areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, protected wrecks, registered battlefields and World Heritage Sites. The PPS recognises that some heritage assets have no formal designation but are nonetheless still of heritage interest, and are thus a material planning consideration. Such assets may be identified through the planning process, including pre-application discussions with the local planning authority, through reviewing historic maps and records and through consulting the Historic Environment Record (see KCC web-site).

The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic and archaeological interest, and further advice on this is given in the Practice Guide, which accompanies PPS5.

The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on the significance of the asset. So for example, an extension to an unlisted building in a Conservation Area may only require a few lines to assess the character of the area and the impact of the proposals on that character, however a listed building application for substantial alterations, or the demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation area, will require far greater analysis and justification. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets themselves should have been assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary, given the applications impact.

This information should then be used to fully explain the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage asset, as part of an explanation of the design concept. This will form a crucial part of any application and should be set out in the Design and Access Statement when one is required.

Applications will not be validated until sufficient information has been submitted to fully explain the significance of any heritage asset and the impact of any proposals on those assets. It is therefore vital that sufficient information is provided at the submission stage, if delays in processing are to be avoided.

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