



# Understanding Historic Buildings: Policy and Guidance for Local Planning Authorities



ENGLISH HERITAGE

## Cover: P&O Site (Regent Quarter) Kings Cross, London

Understanding historic buildings is not only important in informing planning decisions, but also in designing a redevelopment scheme. An assessment of an area of land to the east of Kings Cross Station led to a better understanding of a number of small-scale industrial and residential buildings dating to the period 1830–1870 and prompted imaginative ideas for retention and reuse. These give the area its distinctive character and sense of place. The Regent Quarter is now being marketed on the strength of its historic ambience. Where alteration and demolition occurred, conditions were used to ensure building recording and archaeological monitoring was undertaken.

*Photograph © Nigel Corrie, English Heritage*

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This document sets out the English Heritage policy on the investigation and recording of historic buildings within the English planning framework. It provides advice on how a specialist understanding of the significance of an historic building and of its constituent parts, can inform a development proposal or scheme of works and assist in the decision-making process. It also identifies the need to record evidence that may be damaged or lost. Part 1 sets out the policy and Parts 2 and 3 provide guidance on how this can be achieved. A checklist is provided at the end.

Although the policy and guidance refers to the historic built environment generally, this approach and the advice contained within the *English Heritage Charter for Advisory Services*, will also help local planning authorities and applicants in their consultations with English Heritage.<sup>1</sup> The policy statement and guidance is intended to promote national good practice in accordance with Government planning policy guidance. It is also consistent with the proposed reforms of the heritage protection system as set out in the *Draft Heritage Protection Bill*.<sup>2</sup>

English Heritage has also prepared a companion document to this policy and guidance, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*. This gives detailed practical advice on the approaches and techniques for the recording, analysis and interpretation of historic buildings across a range of circumstances including those resulting from the planning process.<sup>3</sup> A third document, *Understanding Historic Areas*, will provide advice on the range of approaches involved in assessing historic areas and is to be published in 2008.

<sup>1</sup> English Heritage 2005 *Planning and Development in the Historic Environment: A Charter for English Heritage Advisory Services*, English Heritage 2nd Ed

<sup>2</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2008 *Draft Heritage Protection Bill*, TSO

<sup>3</sup> English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*, English Heritage

## I POLICY STATEMENT

**Background.** Government policy and advice on the management of the historic environment, within the English planning framework, is set out in *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development* and in more detail in *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* and *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning*.<sup>4</sup> These documents provide guidance to planning authorities, property owners, developers, amenity societies and the general public on the operation of the planning system. The Government White Paper *Planning for a Sustainable Future*, published in May 2007, sets out proposals for a review of national planning policy documents.<sup>5</sup>

The Government also intends to reform the current system of heritage protection and put forward its proposals in the *Draft Heritage Protection Bill*.<sup>6</sup> The initial White Paper, *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*, contained a consultation question on the possibility of extending the good practice recommended in *Planning Policy Guidance 16* on pre-application assessment across the range of historic assets on major development sites.<sup>7</sup> This aims to clarify any potential designation activity as early as possible in the development of proposals for the site. In its analysis of the responses to the consultation in the White Paper, the Government has set out its intention to publish new statutory guidance to promote pre-application assessments for all major planning applications.<sup>8</sup> The importance of pre-application assessment is also highlighted in the approaches put forward in this document.

**Audience.** This policy statement and guidance is aimed at local authority specialist historic environment staff (including both historic buildings conservation and archaeological officers) and local authority planning officers. It may also be of interest to applicants, developers and their agents who wish to understand more about the process of investigating and recording historic buildings. The advice is applicable to individual buildings and larger areas where works are proposed and is equally appropriate to nationally and locally designated and undesignated historic assets. It complements the more detailed advice given in *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation*, by providing practical guidance on the importance of historic building investigation and recording within the English planning process and advice on how this can be achieved. <sup>9</sup>

This document is also supported by a number of case studies showing how the policy and guidance can be implemented in a range of different circumstances.

**1 Informed Conservation.** Understanding the significance of an historic building, complex or area (the 'asset') and the possible impact of a proposed scheme on this significance is the key to good conservation practice. Good information, available from the outset, can speed up the processing of applications, reduce costs and lead to better overall design.

**2 Preliminary Consultation.** Applicants are responsible for providing sufficient information to enable a local planning authority to determine an application. Through pre-application consultation the local planning authority will be able to set out the minimum information requirements that will be needed to consider a proposal. Drawings, photographs and written information should be used to convey the existing character of the historic building, complex or area. These should demonstrate the likely impact of a scheme on its significance and the measures that have been taken to avoid or minimise damage.

**3 Impact Assessment.** When a local planning authority receives an application affecting an historic building, complex or area, it should ensure that sufficient information is available to make an informed decision on the likely impact of the proposal. If there is a need for additional information this can often be satisfied by asking the applicant to submit further details, but where the implications of the proposal remain unclear, the applicant may be asked to produce a specialist assessment in order to understand the potential impact of their proposals on the significance of the historic asset.

**4 Conservation Planning.** Where pre-application discussions have taken place, the need for a specialist assessment may have been identified on the basis of the applicant's preliminary proposals. If a scheme is at a very early stage, or has yet to be drawn up, the local planning authority may advise the applicant to undertake a rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan before taking their proposals any further. These provide information on the significance of an historic building, complex or area and guidance on how that significance could be retained, reinforced or enhanced in any future use, repair, alteration or development. The findings can then be used to shape and inform an emerging scheme. This will avoid potential difficulties that might arise later in the process.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005 *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*, HMSO, Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage 1994 *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment*, HMSO and

Department of the Environment 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning*, HMSO

<sup>5</sup> HM Government 2007 *Planning for a Sustainable Future*, TSO

<sup>6</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2008 ref. 2

<sup>7</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and Welsh Assembly Government 2007 *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*, TSO

<sup>8</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2007 *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century: An Analysis of Consultation Responses*, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

**5 Recording Conditions.** In considering an application, a local planning authority may judge that in some cases the degree of unavoidable harm is outweighed by the benefits of a scheme. Where this will result in the loss of historical information or evidence, its recording can be secured through the use of conditions. These can also be used to ensure that previously hidden features are identified and recorded during the course of works.

**6 Dissemination of Information.** Local planning authorities must ensure that the results of any investigation and recording, undertaken as part of the planning process, are deposited in the local Historic Environment Record. This will assist in the future management of an historic building, complex or area. The results may also be of interest to the local community and for educational and academic purposes.

**7 Appropriate Standards.** The investigation and recording of an historic building, complex or area, which is undertaken as a requirement of the planning process, should be carried out to standards which are proportionate to its importance and the impact of the proposed change. It must be relevant to the proposed scheme, reasonable, appropriate and justifiable.

**Note:** Throughout the remainder of this document, the word 'historic asset' denotes, where appropriate, not only individual buildings, but complexes, sites and wider areas.

## 2 GUIDANCE

### Informed Conservation

Historic assets represent a precious and irreplaceable resource. They give distinctiveness, meaning and quality to the places where we live, work and visit and make an important contribution to our quality of life and sense of place. They are a social and economic asset and a resource for learning and enjoyment. When a scheme is proposed for development, alteration or repair it is therefore essential to consider how these actions may affect the significance of the asset, its constituent parts and its setting. This understanding of significance and the potential impact of proposals, forms the basis against which the merits of any scheme can be judged. English Heritage promotes a values based approach to significance as set out in the *Conservation Principles*.<sup>9</sup>

### Preliminary Consultation

*Planning Policy Statement 1* highlights the importance and benefits of pre-application discussions between developers and local planning authorities.<sup>11</sup> Preliminary consultation with the local planning authority is the key to an informed and reasonable planning decision on all applications affecting the historic environment. Where pre-application discussions have been held it will very often be possible to reach an understanding between the applicant and the local planning authority on how a proposal is to be taken forward. If these discussions do not take place until after detailed designs have been prepared and financial arrangements lined up, any necessary refinement or revisions of proposals becomes much more difficult and expensive to achieve.

### Impact Assessment

When a local planning authority receives a planning application, or other applications affecting an historic asset, it should ensure it has sufficient information to understand fully the implications of the proposal on the asset's significance. The information provided for local planning authorities also needs to be accessible and useful for statutory and other consultees and the general public.

The potential impact of a scheme and the steps that have been taken to avoid or minimise damage might be demonstrated through the submission of a Design and Access Statement or a Heritage Statement where this is a requirement.<sup>12</sup> In other instances, the applicant may be asked to provide additional drawings and written details to clarify the possible impact of the scheme on the significance of the asset.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, K 2001 *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation*, English Heritage

<sup>10</sup> English Heritage 2008 *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, English Heritage

<sup>11</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005 ref. 4

In the majority of cases, especially where the works are relatively straightforward, the local planning authority will be able to reach a decision on the acceptability of a proposal on the basis of the information before it.

However, there will be instances when the information is insufficient and concerns remain about the potential impact of the proposed change on the significance of the asset. On these occasions the applicant may be asked to provide the local planning authority with a specialist assessment.

## Specialist Assessments

A specialist assessment will provide an understanding of the significance of the historic asset and, in particular, the possible impact of the scheme on its significance and setting. The assessment might include some or all of the following:

- Historical research
- Fabric analysis
- Architectural investigation
- An examination of any surviving fixtures and fittings
- Exploratory works
- The detailed analysis of decorative schemes or particular materials
- Tree-ring dating (dendrochronology)
- An archaeological evaluation

A specialist assessment is not an onerous exercise, but it needs to be undertaken by a suitably qualified specialist who can present the information in a manner which is acceptable to the local planning authority. Applicants should always ensure the assessment will be fit-for-purpose by agreeing its precise nature and extent with the local planning authority before commissioning any work. Some invasive techniques may require formal consent and the local planning authority must be consulted to determine whether this is needed.

Once a specialist assessment has been completed, the local planning authority will be able to make an informed decision as to whether the impact of the scheme and any measures that have been taken to avoid or minimise possible harm are acceptable. In some cases, the design may need to be amended or alternative options considered, but where the degree of harm to the significance of the asset outweighs any possible benefits, the application may be refused.

## CASE STUDY A

### Beauvale Abbey Farmhouse, Nottinghamshire

This Grade II listed vernacular farmhouse is located over the cloister of a Carthusian monastery and surrounded by the standing remains of the medieval complex. Having been empty for some time, an application for listed building consent was submitted to alter and upgrade the building as a dwelling. Given concerns about the possible impact of the submitted scheme, the local planning authority advised the applicant to undertake a specialist assessment. This analysis explained the historical development of the house and identified surviving features of interest. The original application was refused, but a new scheme was drawn up based on the findings of the assessment. This retained significant features and spaces and reduced demolition. Listed building consent has now been granted.  
*Photograph © Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit*

## CASE STUDY B

### 3 – 4 West Street, Exeter

Listed Grade II this vernacular building shares a party wall with the medieval church of St Mary Steps. The Statutory List Description, dating to the 1970s, is short and describes the Georgian shop frontage only, commenting that the building is “probably 18th century”. Following applications for planning permission and listed building consent for its conversion into flats, a site inspection was undertaken by the local authority planning and archaeology officers. This identified several areas of pre-18th century fabric including a fine moulded timber ceiling of 16th century date.

The scheme would remove a section of the moulded ceiling to create a new staircase, which it was suggested would only affect modern replacement timber. To clarify this and the wider impact of the works, the applicant was asked to provide a specialist assessment of the ceiling and of the building as a whole. Few replacement timbers were identified in the area of the proposed new stair and the applications were refused after the agent declined to amend them. Later, a new set of proposals was submitted which re-used an original stair position and retained other significant historic fabric. Planning permission and listed building consent have now been granted.

*Photography © Andrew Pye Exeter City Council*

<sup>12</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government 2006 *Circular 01/2006 Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System*, TSO and Communities and Local Government 2007 *The Validation of Planning Applications*:

*Guidance for Local Planning Authorities*, Communities and Local Government. The latter puts forward new guidance on information requirements for the validation of planning applications. This came into force in April 2008. Heritage

Statements are included on the recommended national list of local requirements that may be adopted locally.

A



## CASE STUDY C

### Rowstock Cottage, Oxfordshire

In 2004 a planning application to demolish this unlisted cottage and replace it with a new house, led to an historical and archaeological assessment. This was requested by the local planning authority partly in response to concerns raised by the parish council. It was initially thought that Rowstock Cottage might be dated to the early-20th century. However, closer examination of the building showed it was built of cob, a relatively rare building material in this area and had a *cottage ornee* style comparable to cottage designs of the early- to mid-19th century.

Given the previously unrecognised significance of the building, which might have resulted in a request for its spot listing, the applicant adapted the scheme to incorporate sensitive repair and alteration. This new application was then approved.

*Photograph © Oxford Archaeology*

B



## CASE STUDY D

### St John's Hospital, Lichfield, Staffordshire

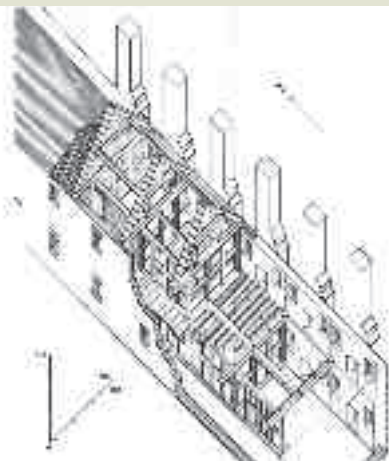
The east range of the Grade I listed St John's Hospital was probably built in 1495. When major internal reordering was proposed, including the removal of all internal partition walls, the local planning authority advised the applicant to undertake a specialist assessment of both the historic fabric and any potential buried archaeology. This confirmed that major alterations, carried out in 1929, included a deep concrete floor throughout the building and the removal of all the primary internal timber-framed partition walls leaving only the primary ceiling beams and joists and the roof trusses in-situ. Due to the previous level of disturbance, it was acknowledged that, although the work would again alter the character of the historic building, the proposed refurbishment would not result in any loss of internal historic fabric and was reversible. Planning permission and listed building consent were granted, subject to the works being monitored. The watching brief enhanced the understanding of the medieval hospital range and the accommodation was brought up to contemporary standards.

*Drawing © Bob Meeson*

C



D



## Conservation Planning

Where pre-application discussions have been held, the local planning authority may be able to identify the need for a specialist assessment at an early stage in the process and before proposals are fully developed. The applicant can then demonstrate, to the local planning authority, how the scheme has responded to the specialist assessment and the steps that have been taken to avoid or minimise possible harm to the asset's significance. The scheme might also include proposals for beneficial change which will reveal or reinforce the significance of the asset.

When a scheme is at a very preliminary stage, or has yet to be drawn up, rapid appraisals, conservation statements and conservation management plans are especially useful. These provide both the applicant and the local planning authority with an understanding of the significance of the historic asset and guidance on how that significance could be retained, reinforced or enhanced in any future use, repair, alteration or development. The findings can then be used to shape and inform an emerging scheme. Potential difficulties or conflicts, that may damage the significance of the asset, are identified from the outset thereby saving the applicant time and expense in the long run. The resulting application should demonstrate how the scheme has been influenced by this work and how it maintains, reveals or reinforces the historic asset's significance.

If an application is accompanied by a rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan, the local planning authority may have sufficient information to make an informed decision. However, in those circumstances where additional detailed work or targeted specialist investigation is required, this should be addressed in consultation with the local planning authority as the scheme is being drawn up.

In deciding whether to use a rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan, consideration should be given to the importance of the asset, the existing state of knowledge and the likely scale and impact of any proposed works. Conservation statements and conservation management plans also provide a conservation framework which will guide and inform an emerging scheme and assist in the future management of the site.

## Rapid Appraisals

A rapid appraisal gives a brief history of the historic asset, its origins and development, use and alteration. It will explain what makes the asset significant, identify any special features it may possess and if the asset is protected through some form of designation, provide an understanding of why this action has been taken.

## Conservation Statements

A conservation statement is an outline version of a conservation management plan. It provides an understanding of an historic asset's significance, identifies key conservation issues and puts forward a framework for its management. A conservation statement may incorporate information from a rapid appraisal, but is not as detailed as a conservation management plan. Conservation statements are appropriate for smaller and less complex sites and in particular, those that would benefit from conservation guidance to inform their future management.

## Conservation Management Plans (also known as Conservation Plans)

A conservation management plan is a comprehensive document based on a detailed understanding of an historic asset and its significance. It sets out a conservation framework. This includes policies to ensure an asset's significance is retained in any future use, repair, alteration, development or management. Conservation management plans are usually most appropriate for historic assets of major national importance, large or complex sites and those where a scheme is likely to involve significant or potentially controversial change.



The Government's *Draft Heritage Protection Bill* sets out provisions for Heritage Partnership Agreements.<sup>13</sup> These are statutory partnerships between owners of large or complex historic sites, their local planning authorities and sometimes English Heritage. They are intended to develop mutually agreed strategic approaches to these sites and to reduce the need for repeated minor consent applications. In many circumstances, conservation management plans will have an important role to play in Heritage Partnership Agreements.

Before deciding on whether to prepare a rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan the applicant should discuss the needs of the case with the local planning authority. Further guidance on the role and use of conservation management plans and conservation statements is given in *Conservation Management Plans* and *Conservation Plans in Action*.<sup>14</sup>

## CASE STUDY E

### Swan Hotel, Lichfield, Staffordshire

On the advice of Lichfield District Council, the developer of the Swan Hotel appointed an historic buildings consultant, at an early stage in the design process, to inform the proposed conversion of this Grade II listed Georgian building to dwellings and restaurant/bar use. An initial appraisal was produced that outlined the overall development of the site and the significance of its component parts. The information from the appraisal, which included an assessment of the date and significance of internal partitions, doorcases, skirtings, etc., was used to refine the emerging design.

The historic buildings consultant was subsequently retained as part of the project team and acted as a useful link between the developer and the local planning authority. As the opening-up work progressed, each new discovery was assessed and any damaging impact of the proposals mitigated as far as possible. The building has been considerably enhanced and is a definite asset to the City.

Photograph © Richard K Morriss & Associates, Shropshire

## CASE STUDY F

### The Vinery, Greenway, Kingswear, Devon

Although not individually listed, the Vinery lies within the curtilage of the Grade II\* listed Greenway House and forms part of a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. It is likely to have been built soon after 1839 and The National Trust planned to repair and return it to traditional horticultural use. The glasshouse was in a fragile condition. It had several phases of repair, but key areas of original fabric remained. A conservation statement accompanied the listed building application. This outlined the development of the structure, identified historical repairs and alterations and put forward a conservation strategy together with details of the proposed works. Information was given on how the glazing was to be renewed, the redecoration of the woodwork based on historical paint analysis and the conservation of the original cast iron stoves.

The statement concluded with an impact assessment that considered each element of the works and its potential impact on the significance of the glasshouse. The conservation statement was shaped and informed by an archaeological evaluation and historic building record. This was updated and revised as part of the repair programme, so that a full record was made of the structure. Having obtained listed building consent all works were undertaken by experienced National Trust craftsman. Photograph © Paul Baker, The National Trust



<sup>13</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2008 ref. 2

<sup>14</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund 2008 *Conservation Management Planning* ([www.hlf.org.uk/hlf/Docs/HelpingYourApplication/Conservation\\_management\\_planning.pdf](http://www.hlf.org.uk/hlf/Docs/HelpingYourApplication/Conservation_management_planning.pdf)) and Clark, K (ed) 1999 *Conservation Plans in Action*, English Heritage

## CASE STUDY G

### Devonshire Royal Hospital, Buxton, Derbyshire

The Grade II\* listed Devonshire Royal Hospital closed in 2000. A conservation plan was prepared for the University of Derby to assist in the initial appraisal of proposals for the re-use of the site and to inform the detailed development of an emerging scheme. Plans to convert the buildings to part of a Buxton campus responded well to the aspects of significance identified in the conservation plan and this proved to be an invaluable tool in guiding and assessing the conservation scheme on a day-to-day basis. The Devonshire Royal Hospital re-opened in 2005 and is widely regarded as an exemplar in the re-use of a listed building.

*Photograph © Visual Media Unit, University of Derby*

## CASE STUDY H

### Royal William Yard, Plymouth

Listed Grade I, the Royal William Yard was built between 1825–31 as a victualling depot for the Royal Navy. It went out of military use in 1992 and was acquired by the South West Regional Development Agency. On the advice of English Heritage and Plymouth City Council a conservation plan was drawn up to enable the Yard to be developed whilst retaining its significance. This set out the opportunities and constraints for the site and was a key document for all those who expressed an interest in its future redevelopment. Initially, the plan informed the conversion of the Clarence and Brewhouse buildings into a mixture of housing and leisure units. The success of this scheme gave the developer the confidence to purchase the entire site and the conservation plan was revised to inform their emerging designs.

*Photograph © Urban Splash*



## Recording Conditions

Where the implications of a proposal on the significance of an historic asset are fully understood, the local planning authority may decide that in some circumstances the degree of unavoidable harm is outweighed by the benefits of the scheme. If this will result in the loss of historical information or evidence, its recording and analysis can be secured by way of a condition attached to the consent or permission. This also provides the opportunity for monitoring during site works (a 'watching brief') to identify and record any previously hidden details. Recording conditions may still be a requirement in cases where a specialist assessment, rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan has already been completed where the loss of information is viewed as an acceptable consequence of the works.

In all cases conditions must be necessary, relevant, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other aspects.<sup>15</sup> If the proposal requires both listed building/conservation area consent and planning permission, the condition should not be duplicated and ought to be imposed on the listed building/conservation area consent only as this is the appropriate control.

Care will need to be exercised in the precise wording of conditions. Standard conditions might not necessarily fit with the circumstances. For example, recording may only be required in respect to one particular feature and the condition might need to reflect only that element of the proposal.

Recording conditions should not normally be used where evidence is likely to be revealed that may merit retention. Such a possibility is generally identified through a specialist assessment or targeted investigation, which is undertaken before the granting of consent, with the condition being used to record historical information or evidence that will be lost as a consequence of the decision. There will be circumstances where this is not possible, especially in the case of hidden details. Therefore, it might be appropriate for a condition to be attached to the listed building consent to ensure that the works are monitored and any unforeseen discoveries are identified and either retained or properly recorded.

This wording is suggested for a recording condition:

### **I For listed building/conservation area consent**

*"No works to which this consent relates shall commence until an appropriate programme of historic building recording and analysis has been secured and implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority."*

### **II For planning permission**

*"No development to which this permission relates shall commence until an appropriate programme of historic building recording and analysis has been secured and implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority."*

**Note:** The Government's *Draft Heritage Protection Bill* contains proposals to merge listed building consent and scheduled monument consent into a single unified historic asset consent and to merge conservation area consent with planning permission. <sup>16</sup>

## CASE STUDY I

### **Rosewastis Mill, St Columb Major, Cornwall**

Planning permission for the residential conversion and renovation of this unlisted early-19th century watermill was granted subject to conditions. These included a detailed record of the building to be undertaken in advance of the change of use and a specification for the repair of the surviving mill machinery and waterwheel which were to be conserved as part of the scheme. At the time of the survey, the building was derelict and covered with a temporary roof of corrugated iron sheets. The report provided a full record of the site in advance of residential conversion. This included documentary research, building description and analysis, measured survey and photography. A brief comparative analysis was also made between this and similar Cornish mills of the same date. As well as contributing to the understanding of Cornish watermills, the report also contained a specification, prepared by a qualified millwright, for the repair of the waterwheel and other machinery.

*Photograph © Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service (Projects)*

<sup>15</sup> Department of the Environment 1995 *Circular 11/95 Use of Conditions in Planning Permission*, HMSO and Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage 1994 ref. 4 Annex B, B.9

<sup>16</sup> Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2008 ref. 2

## CASE STUDY J

### Lodge Farm, Nazeing Common, Essex

At Lodge Farm, an historic building record of a Grade II listed early-18th century barn and later-19th century farm complex, was undertaken. This satisfied the requirements of a recording condition, attached to the consent, for their conversion to office use. The Historic Environment Branch of Essex County Council gave the applicant a brief outlining the required investigation which was equivalent to an English Heritage Level 3 record. Recording levels and guidelines on their use are explained in the English Heritage publication, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*.<sup>17</sup>

The record was based on existing architect's plans and involved historical research, written description and analysis and drawn and photographic survey. It provided a clear understanding of the farms development and how this was driven by the characteristic events that shaped many of the farms in the region. Copies of the report were given to the applicant, agent, local planning authority, Historic Environment Record and Record Office. The latter also received the site archive.

Historic farm buildings have been identified as a priority in the regional archaeological research framework.<sup>18</sup> Where works involving adaptive reuse or conversion are acceptable, the Historic Environment Branch recommend the use of conditions, where appropriate, to ensure a record is made of the site before its agricultural function is lost. This information is enhancing the current level of understanding of the history of farming in Essex.

Photograph © Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch

## CASE STUDY K

### Cullacott, Werrington, Cornwall

Listed Grade I, this 16th century farmhouse was on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register. Several preliminary studies, including documentary research, fabric analysis, measured survey, dendrochronology and paint analysis informed the programme of English Heritage grant-aided repair. Weathering and agricultural use had exposed much more of the building than is usual and the house was considered to be thoroughly understood. Nevertheless, a recording condition for a 'watching brief' formed part of the consent and good communications between the historic buildings

consultant and building contractor ensured effective site monitoring. During repair works an axial drain was found in the lower end of the house which established that in its first phase Cullacott had been a longhouse. Not only did this help in understanding some of the subsequent changes to the building, it also had significant implications on the known distribution of west-country longhouses. These will now be expected on lower-lying sites away from Dartmoor. This important discovery would not have been made without the watching brief. Cullacott is now used for holiday lets and is marketed partly on its longhouse origins and the quality of its repair. It has also received a RICS national conservation award.

Photograph © John R. L. Thorp, Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants

## CASE STUDY L

### Staircase House, Stockport, Manchester

Listed Grade II\*, the 15th century Staircase House underwent extensive conservation and restoration works between 1994 and 2004. Utilising previous research, a detailed appraisal was undertaken in 1994–5 to provide an initial understanding of the building to inform a major programme of repair. Based on an English Heritage Level 3 record this involved a variety of techniques including documentary research, historic fabric analysis, total station and hand measured survey, rectified and record photography, dendrochronology and archaeological excavation. Recording levels and guidelines on their use are explained in the English Heritage Publication, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*.<sup>19</sup>

The value of undertaking a preliminary appraisal was highlighted when a serious fire broke out in November 1995 just before the site was purchased by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. The fire caused serious damage to the structure and a long delay to the project.

The second stage of survey work began in 1999 and finished in 2004 when the restoration was finally completed. The survey fulfilled the requirements of conditions attached to the listed building consent and planning permission and was guided by a brief prepared by the local planning authority. It involved additional survey work, a watching brief during the renovation, dendrochronology and further historical research. The information from the survey not only refined the scheme and avoided any damaging impacts, but was also used as the basis for a new exhibition on the development of Staircase House and a guidebook. Photograph © University of Manchester Archaeological Unit

<sup>17</sup> English Heritage 2006 ref. 3

<sup>19</sup> English Heritage 2006 ref. 3

<sup>18</sup> Brown, N and Glazebrook, J 2000  
*Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, Research Agenda and Strategy*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper No. 8



provides the applicant with clear guidance on what is required, its purpose and the questions that need to be addressed. The brief may be prepared by the professional adviser to the applicant, but the content of the brief should always be agreed with the local planning authority before work starts.

The level of investigation should be determined by the importance of the historic asset, the existing state of knowledge and the needs of the proposal. In the case of a specialist assessment or recording condition, it will be guided by the likely scale and impact of the proposed change on the asset's significance. If the results are to be meaningful they will usually need to be considered in the wider context of the site as a whole.

*Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* describes a range of approaches that are available for the investigation, recording and interpretation of an historic asset and provides guidance on when they are applicable. These include forms and levels of recording, the role of documentary research, measured survey and drawings, photography and the content and format of a report.<sup>20</sup>

Once the brief has been issued to the applicant or their agent they will be able to obtain a costed written scheme of investigation from a suitably qualified specialist. Care will need to be taken in finding a qualified and experienced practitioner to undertake the investigation and recording of an historic asset. Details of practitioners may be found in the annual yearbooks of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and by reference to RIBA, RICS and other professional bodies.<sup>21</sup>

Further guidance on the techniques for understanding historic assets and how to integrate understanding with conservation projects is given in *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation*. The document also contains an outline brief and advice on how to commission this work. A model brief for a conservation management plan has been produced by the Heritage Lottery Fund.<sup>22</sup>

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION

This section gives practical advice on how to administer the investigation and recording of an historic asset through the planning framework, the use of specialists to undertake the work and the methods for presenting and disseminating the results.

#### The Brief

A brief provides the best method of defining the proper focus for the investigation and recording of an historic asset when this is required as part of the planning process. It should be a short document which describes why the work needs to be undertaken, the scope and intensity, or level of investigation, the methodology, content and distribution of reports and, where appropriate, archive arrangements and public dissemination. The brief is normally written by local authority specialist historic environment staff and

<sup>20</sup> English Heritage 2006 ref. 3

<sup>21</sup> *Institute of Field Archaeologists Yearbook and Directory*, Institute of Field Archaeologists and *Institute of Historic Building Conservation Handbook*, Institute of Historic Building Conservation

<sup>22</sup> Clark, K 2001 ref. 9 and Heritage Lottery Fund 2008 ref. 14. Research on the application of *Planning Policy Guidance 15* for the investigation and recording of historic buildings has been published by Gould, S 2004 'Analysing and Recording

Historic Buildings', *Context*, No. 84, pp. 23-30. This also considers the content of the local authority brief based on a review of current practice.

## Written Scheme of Investigation

A written scheme of investigation is prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner; usually in response to a brief and gives a detailed account of how its requirements are to be met including working methods, anticipated outputs, the dissemination and archiving of information, monitoring and quality assurance arrangements and a timetable. The written scheme of investigation should demonstrate a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the brief and explain how these are to be achieved. It may also contain additional information such as the qualifications and expertise of all project personnel, together with contractual details and costs which are only likely to be of relevance to the commissioning body. Where recording is a condition of consent or permission the local planning authority must agree and validate the written scheme of investigation. However, in all cases the applicant should invite comments from the local planning authority on the appropriateness of their preferred written scheme of investigation before the start of work. This will ensure that the approach and the information produced will satisfy any planning requirement. All work should be monitored and reviewed so that it meets the agreed standard, is of an appropriate quality and fulfils the requirements of the brief and written scheme of investigation. Monitoring is normally undertaken by local authority specialist historic environment staff in accordance with the arrangements set out in the written scheme of investigation. The local planning authority must also ensure that the resulting report is of an acceptable standard.

## CASE STUDY M

### Housing Market Renewal in North Staffordshire

The landscape of the Potteries is undergoing major transformation. The North Staffordshire Pathfinder, RENEW, has been established to tackle the problem of low demand housing and associated issues. English Heritage is working with RENEW to ensure that the regeneration of the area takes account of its historic character. An area-based survey of the North Staffordshire Urban Core, within the Housing Market Renewal Area, is providing an understanding of significance to inform the management of change.

The work has been commissioned by RENEW. This follows the methodology set out in the model brief which accompanied the English Heritage position statement *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment*.<sup>23</sup> The characterisation process includes



detailed survey work and assessments of significance. It initially focussed on two 'Areas of Major Intervention' to provide an understanding of the character of places and to identify those parts where distinctive townscapes and buildings retain their coherence. By providing information to enable new development to respond to the local historic context, it will also help in the regeneration of areas where demolition and redevelopment are proposed.

In light of the information that has been produced, a protocol is now being developed to ensure that heritage issues are fully considered alongside other evidence during policy formulation, masterplanning, development briefing and the detailed consideration of specific development proposals.

<sup>23</sup> English Heritage 2005 *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment*, English Heritage

The survey has now been extended to cover the whole of the North Staffordshire Conurbation to provide information for the Urban Futures Project. This will establish a process of informed change that makes the most of the area's historic character.

*Photograph © The Conservation Studio*

## CASE STUDY N

### Ovaltine Factory, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire

An appraisal of the Ovaltine Factory formed part of an Environmental Impact Assessment prepared on behalf of Fairview New Homes Limited in support of their redevelopment proposals. Although the site was of historic significance, only the landmark façade merited retention. Following advice from the Historic Environment Unit at Hertfordshire County Council, Three Rivers District Council imposed a recording condition on the planning permission. This ensured a full record was made of the factory in advance of its residential development. It included description, analysis, photographic and drawn record and documentary research. Oral testimonies of former staff ranging from managers to packers were recorded. These not only assisted in the interpretation of the manufacturing process, but also provided a valuable insight into the working and social environment of the buildings. The findings of the record were disseminated in a detailed report, deposited at the County Historic Environment Record and local and regional archives.

*Photograph © CgMs Consulting*

## Dissemination of Information

Information generated through the investigation and recording of an historic asset as part of the planning process should be appropriately disseminated and archived at a level that reflects its significance. This will be in accordance with the timetable set out in the brief and confirmed in the written scheme of investigation.

## Dissemination and Publication

Copies of the report should be given to the applicant/owner, local planning authority and the local Historic Environment Record. By depositing a copy of the report in the local Historic Environment Record, the local planning authority will be able to refer to it should further works be considered on this or similar historic assets in the future. Owners, in particular, should be encouraged to include the report within a 'logbook' for their property, together with details of any alterations and repairs.

## Reports

The results should be set out in the form of a report which is clear and easy to read, well illustrated and presents the findings in an accessible manner. Reports are normally expected to be submitted in hard and digital format. The structure, length and level of detail may vary, but broadly all reports should contain the following:

- Site name, address and National Grid Reference
- Author and date
- Summary
- Site location and description
- Existing statutory and non-statutory designations
- Planning history
- Aims, objectives, methods, scope and limitations
- Historical background including sources of information
- Description
- Analysis and interpretation
- Significance
- Assessment of impact (if appropriate)
- Recommendations for future work (if appropriate)
- Conservation management policies (for conservation management plans and conservation statements)
- Conclusions
- References
- Figures – historic maps, measured survey drawings and photographs
- Location and contents of archive (if appropriate)
- Appendices (which include both the brief and written scheme of investigation)

The information within the report may also be of educational and academic interest and depending on local circumstances and acquisitions policies, it might be appropriate to send copies of the report to the Local Studies Library, the relevant Record Office, local archaeological and historical societies and some universities (e.g. those hosting centres for regional studies). An entry should also be made on the national OASIS system to publicise brief details of the work and the location of reports and archives.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> English Heritage, in partnership with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and the Archaeological Investigations Project (AIP), has developed the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological

Investigations (OASIS). A key aim of OASIS is to publicise summary details of sites recorded and the location of the resulting reports and archives to the wider professional and research

community. For further information consult the OASIS website at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/index.cfm>

Where the results make a significant contribution to the knowledge of an important site, or where they are of wider relevance to a class of historic asset or geographical area, it may be appropriate to submit an article to a county, regional or national journal. In exceptional circumstances the intrinsic interest or celebrity of the asset, or the adoption of an innovative approach to its understanding, may justify the preparation of an academic site monograph or a popular publication. For major projects, as a means of disseminating the results to the wider public, site tours, open days, lectures and articles in the local press should also be considered.

In order to avoid the possible disclosure of sensitive information the decision on the most appropriate form of dissemination and the timing of its release should be agreed with the owner or developer.

### Archiving

Where a site archive is to be produced it might include digital data, photographs, negatives, survey drawings and a copy of the report. This should be deposited in a local repository which has arrangements for the long-term preservation of such material, such as the relevant Record Office, the local Museums Service, a Local Studies Library or Local History Centre. Where records are part of a regional or national study, a repository with a wider remit, such as the National Monuments Record (the national archive of the historic environment and part of English Heritage), may be more appropriate. The content and location of the archive should be identified in the brief and confirmed in the written scheme of investigation with the latter providing a commitment that the archive will be deposited in accordance with any guidelines the local repository may have on acceptable formats and documentation.

**Note:** *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* and *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation* provide detailed guidance on the content and format of reports, archiving and the dissemination of information. For conservation management plans and conservation statements further advice is given in *Conservation Management Planning and Conservation Plans in Action*.<sup>25</sup>

### Research Context

All work undertaken on an historic asset as part of the planning process must be based on a clear set of research objectives. It should aim to enhance the existing understanding of the asset, whilst being shaped according to the particular needs of the planning proposal. To understand the parts of an asset that may be affected by a scheme, there will usually need to be a summary analysis of the whole of which it forms a part and its wider context. By ensuring the brief and written scheme of investigation have a clear research focus, the work should aim to increase the existing level of understanding for a particular site, area or class of historic asset. Investigation and understanding within an evolving research context should be present at all points in the process with appropriate levels of analysis, dissemination and, where appropriate, the public deposit of the site archive.

Where a cumulative body of work has been completed in response to the planning process, consideration should be given to publishing this information. The synthesis might cover a particular class of asset, area or settlement. It could characterise the resource, demonstrate how the work has enhanced the existing level of knowledge, highlight areas for future research and provide guidance on the key issues to be addressed in ensuring successful conservation outcomes.

### CASE STUDY O

#### Higher Barracks, Exeter, Devon

These cavalry barracks were originally constructed in 1794. Several late-18th and 19th century buildings survive, of which six are Grade II listed and the remainder lie within a conservation area. The site remained in military ownership until 1997, when it was sold to a volume house builder.



<sup>25</sup> English Heritage ref. 3; Clark, K 2001 ref. 9; Heritage Lottery Fund 2008 ref. 14 and Clark, K (ed) 1999 ref. 14





and the site archive deposited in the local museum. Two site interpretation panels have also been erected to satisfy the requirements of further conditions.  
*Photograph © Exeter Archaeology and the Royal Albert Museum, Exeter*

## CASE STUDY P

### Elmbridge Boarding School, Fyfield, Essex

Erected in 1884 and listed Grade II a recording condition was attached to the listed building consent to convert Fyfield School into flats. Much of the internal evidence relating to the former school would be lost during its conversion and this was a final opportunity to examine the layout of the building and how its development reflected changing educational practices. Through a careful analysis of the fabric, together with the limited documentary record, a detailed understanding of room function and the circulation patterns for both children and staff was developed. Surveillance was an important means of controlling behaviour and a number of observation portals survived. The interpretation benefited from an access analysis which showed the pattern of movement through the building and the relationship between those areas occupied by staff and children.

*Photograph © Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit*



## CASE STUDY Q

### The Palace, Knottingley and The Empire, Moorthorpe, West Yorkshire

A record was made of these two unlisted early-20th century cinemas to fulfil the requirements of a recording condition attached to the planning permission for their residential conversion. Although much has been written on the history of cinemas, only a small number have been subject to a detailed architectural and archaeological analysis. Through a combination of drawn and photographic survey, historical research, oral testimony and consultation with local historians, it was possible to gain an understanding of the form and function of each building, their technical and mechanical arrangements, decorative schemes and subsequent development. An important part of the analysis was to consider the architectural, urban and social context of the cinemas and the emotional impact that such a building had on those using it. As well as placing copies of each survey report in the local Historic Environment Record, the information has been published in a volume of papers which seek to contribute towards a research framework for industrial archaeology in Britain.<sup>24</sup>

*Photograph The Palace, Knottingley © Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd*

The planning authority advised the new owners to commission an archaeological and historic buildings appraisal. This considered the significance of the buildings and their surviving historic fabric and fittings. It placed them within the overall sequence of the site and looked at the potential of below-ground archaeological remains. Although the initial applications for planning permission and listed building consent were refused owing to their unacceptable impact on the significance of the site, a revised scheme, based on the findings of the appraisal, was approved.

A condition was used to ensure further detailed recording was undertaken. The brief for the recording was prepared by the local authority archaeology officer, in agreement with the historic buildings conservation officer. The recording included an analytical description, drawn plans and elevations (based on the existing architect's survey) and photography. A two-volume report has been produced and offered to the local studies library as well as being deposited in the City's Historic Environment Record. It has also been published on the web via the Archaeological Data Service website

<sup>24</sup> *Industrial Archaeology Review* 2005 Vol. XXVII, No. 1

## KEY SOURCES

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) 1997 *Analysis and Recording for the Conservation and Control of Works to Historic Buildings and Advice to Local Authorities and Applicants*, ALGAO

Brown, D 2007 *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum

Clark, K (ed) 1999 *Conservation Plans in Action*, English Heritage

Clark, K 2001 *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation*, English Heritage

Department of the Environment 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning*, HMSO

Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage 1994 *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment*, HMSO

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*, English Heritage

English Heritage 2006 *Measured and Drawn: Techniques and Practice for the Metric Survey of Historic Buildings*, English Heritage

Gould, S 2004 'Analysing and Recording Historic Buildings', *Context*, No. 84, pp. 23-30

Heritage Lottery Fund 1998 *Conservation Plans for Historic Places*, Heritage Lottery Fund

Heritage Lottery Fund 2008 *Conservation Management Planning* ([www.hlf.org.uk/hlf/Docs/HelpingYourApplication/Conservation\\_management\\_planning.pdf](http://www.hlf.org.uk/hlf/Docs/HelpingYourApplication/Conservation_management_planning.pdf))

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 2001 *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*, revised edn, IFA

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005 *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*, HMSO

Further English Heritage advice and guidance that has been produced to support local authorities in caring for the historic environment can be found on the Historic Environment Local Management (HELM) website ([www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)). Publications which may be of particular interest include:

- *Local Strategic Partnerships and the Historic Environment*
- *Local Area Agreements and the Historic Environment*
- *Regeneration and the Historic Environment: Heritage as a catalyst for better social and economic regeneration*
- *Regeneration in Historic Coastal Towns*
- *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment*
- *Suburbs and the Historic Environment*
- *The Future of Historic School Buildings*
- *Transport and the Historic Environment*
- *Streets for All*
- *Climate Change and the Historic Environment*

These publications, as well as many others, are accessible via the Guidance Library section of the site.

The HELM website also contains access to a number of local authority related case studies which may also be of interest.

## CHECKLIST

### A Checklist for the Investigation and Recording of an Historic Asset within the Planning Framework for England.

A specialist understanding of the significance of an historic asset can help in the sustainable management of change and assist in the decision-making process. It can reduce or avoid any damaging impacts whilst providing information on how the significance of the asset could be retained, reinforced or enhanced. Records should be made of historical information or evidence whose loss is viewed as an acceptable consequence of works. The results of the assessment, investigation and recording should be appropriately disseminated and archived.

QUESTION	NOTE
<p>During pre-application consultation with the local planning authority, has the applicant established whether the proposed scheme will affect an historic asset and sought guidance on the information requirements that will be needed to support any future application?</p>	<p>Through pre-application consultation the local planning authority will be able to set out the minimum information requirements that are necessary to consider any future proposal.</p>
<p>If the proposals are at a very preliminary stage, or have yet to be drawn up, should the applicant be advised to prepare a rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan before taking their proposals any further?</p>	<p>Rapid appraisals, conservation statements and conservation management plans provide both the applicant and the local planning authority with an initial understanding of the significance of an historic asset and guidance on how that significance could be retained, reinforced or enhanced in any future use, repair, alteration or development.</p>
<p>When an application has been submitted for works to an historic asset, is further information needed to understand fully the impact of the proposal on its significance and should this include a specialist assessment?</p>	<p>A specialist assessment will help determine the possible impact of a submitted scheme on the significance of an historic asset. The need for a specialist assessment may have been identified during pre-application discussions on the basis of the applicant's preliminary proposals. The submitted scheme should then demonstrate how it has been shaped and informed by this information.</p>
<p>Having considered the specialist assessment, rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan, is the impact of the submitted scheme on the significance of the historic asset acceptable?</p>	<p>The specialist assessment, rapid appraisal, conservation statement or conservation management plan will enable the local planning authority to make an informed decision on the impact of the submitted scheme on the significance of the historic asset.</p>
<p>If permission or consent is likely to be granted should the local planning authority attach a condition for the recording of historical information or evidence that will be lost?</p>	<p>Conditions will ensure that the loss of evidence as part of the approved scheme is mitigated by recording and provide the opportunity for the identification of hidden features during the course of works.</p>
<p>Where the investigation and recording of an historic asset has been undertaken to fulfil the requirements of the planning process the local planning authority must always ensure the resulting reports are of an acceptable standard. Do they contain sufficient levels of analysis and will the results be appropriately disseminated and archived?</p>	<p>The information contained within the report will be of value for the future management, maintenance and repair of an historic asset, whilst also being of educational and academic interest.</p>



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