



GUIDANCE ON HERITAGE STATEMENTS

What is a Heritage Statement?

A heritage statement is a document used to provide information about the significance of any heritage assets that may be impacted by development proposals. They include information about why the heritage asset/s is significant and how the proposals might impact this significance. Heritage statements are used by decision makers to provide an informed understanding of the potential impacts of application proposals on designated and non-designated heritage assets. They are a required document for most applications relating to development in the historic built environment. Where proposals include significant change to heritage assets, it is strongly advised that a suitably qualified expert prepares the heritage statement on behalf of the applicant. This will ensure the required information is submitted and the application can be validated without delay.

When is a Heritage Statement required?

A heritage statement is required for all applications that have the potential to affect the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, including by development within their setting. All of the below applications require the submission of a heritage statement:

- Listed Building Consent applications
- Planning applications that are adjacent to or in close proximity to a listed building (including those in the local list)
- Planning applications (excluding change of use) to sites within conservation areas, or affecting the setting of a conservation area
- Applications for conservation area consent

What to include in a Heritage Statement:

The level of detail in a Heritage Statement is dependent on the nature of the works proposed and in the majority of cases a full architectural and historic analysis is unlikely to be required. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that:

'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.'

As a minimum, any statutory designations, such as the listing description (found on Historic England's website [here](#)) should be included in the heritage statement.

Following on from this, an outline of the below should be included:

- A description of the proposal and how this might affect the heritage asset/s
- Designation of the asset, such as the listing description, conservation area, information from the local list or information about the curtilage if the building is believed to be curtilage listed
- Any relevant planning history, including application numbers where appropriate
- A description of the significance of the heritage asset/s, which may include archaeological interest, architectural and artistic interest, and/or historic interest
- An assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage asset/s, including impacts on setting
- Where necessary, justification for any negative impacts to the significance of the heritage asset/s
- Supporting information, such as historic maps and photographs of the heritage asset/s and their setting, are useful to include in the heritage statement and we encourage including these

For further information about what to include in a heritage statement, we recommend reading Historic England's Advice Note 12 [Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets](#).

Useful Links

There are many sources of information on the internet, at your local library or the Kent archives in Maidstone. The following list is not exhaustive but may be of interest:

Historic England's Advice Note 12 [Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets](#): We recommend reading this document if you require assistance in preparing a heritage statement.

[Kent County Council Historic Environment Record](#) (HER): a database of archaeological sites, finds and buildings.

[Historic maps](#):

[A Pictorial History of Ashford](#): A personal archive of modern and historic photographs

of the town by Chris Crook

Glossary of Terms

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Designated heritage asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation

Heritage asset: 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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment record: Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

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

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.