

4.10 Heritage Assets

Reasoned Justification

- 4.79 South Norfolk has a considerable wealth of buildings and settlements of architectural and historic interest, with important examples from a range of historical periods, architecture styles and traditional methods of construction. Local building traditions are strongly related to the local availability of materials which dictated their form of construction and appearance. These indigenous characteristics help provide a 'sense of place' and contribute towards defining the local distinctiveness of the district. The South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD includes an overview of local context and the key characteristics of the various parts of the district – reflecting the historic built environment and landscape setting. A programme of Conservation Area appraisals is in place to add further detail in the designated areas and the Council is developing the **South Norfolk Development in the Historic Environment SPD** to provide specific guidance for development proposals to ensure that **heritage assets** are conserved in a manner that is appropriate to their significance.
- 4.80 The **National Planning Policy Framework** advocates that local plan policies should aim to ensure that developments “respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation”. It places “great weight” on the conservation of **heritage assets**, and how they can make a positive contribution to sustainable communities.
- 4.81 Heritage assets are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework 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”. It includes nationally ‘**designated heritage assets**’ and other ‘**non-designated heritage assets**’.
- 4.82 The National Planning Policy Framework defines ‘significance’ in this context 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.”
- 4.83 The ‘designated heritage assets’ in the district comprise over 3400 listed buildings, 53 Conservation Areas, 37 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and 7 Registered parks and gardens. Where practical these are shown on the **Policies Map**.
- 4.84 In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, s66 (1) of the Listed Buildings Act 1990 requires that the decision maker shall have special

regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. S72 of the Act requires that in the exercise of planning and certain other stated statutory functions, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Applications will be considered as to whether they result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm as set out in the NPPF.

Policy DM 4.10 Heritage Assets

All development proposals must have regard to the historic environment and take account of the contribution which heritage assets make to the significance of an area and its sense of place, as defined by reference to the national and local evidence base relating to heritage.

Change of use, alterations and extensions affecting the significance of a designated heritage asset, including its setting, must have regard to and positively respond to, that significance.

Proposals must sustain, and where possible enhance and better reveal the significance of the asset and make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.

Proposals must show how the significance of the heritage asset has been assessed and taken into account by reference to the Historic Environment Record, suitable expertise and other evidence/research as may be necessary.

Considerable importance and weight must be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and the character and appearance of conservation areas. Development should avoid causing any loss to a heritage asset, or harm to it. Substantial harm or total loss will only be justified where it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to achieve substantial benefits or where the retention of the asset is unsustainable, no viable alternatives can be identified and the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.

Less than substantial harm will only be justified where there are public benefits that outweigh the harm. In carrying out this planning balance, less than substantial harm will be afforded considerable importance and weight.

Proposals which adversely affect the significance of a heritage asset will only exceptionally be permitted where clear and convincing justification is provided.

Notes

- The **National Planning Policy Framework** Section 12 addresses the conservation and enhancement of the **historic environment**

- **Joint Core Strategy** Policies 1 and 2 address the protection of **environmental assets** (including built environment and **heritage assets**) and promotes good quality design that respects the historic environment taking account of conservation appraisals and the wider landscape.
- Guidance on the historic characteristics of places in South Norfolk and how to respond to these characteristics is set out in:
 - **South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD**
 - **South Norfolk Development in the Historic Environment SPD**
 - *Conservation Area character appraisals and management plans*
<http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/4021.asp>
- Many known heritage assets are also catalogued in the *Norfolk Historic Environment Record* maintained by Norfolk County Council.
http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Environment/Historic_environment/NCC081336
- English Heritage produces a variety of guidance and advice on the design response of proposals which affect heritage assets, and information on the use of traditional construction techniques.
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/>
- Where practical the location of nationally designated heritage assets is identified on the Policies Map. *Further details of listed buildings and Conservation Areas are available from the Council's web site* and the conservation team.

<http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/4021.asp>