



DISCUSSING HERITAGE
HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

PURCELL 

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purcell is an architectural and heritage consultancy practice, with studios across the UK and Asia Pacific. We provide sensitive restoration and repair schemes, bold contemporary design in historic contexts and robust heritage advice. Our heritage consultancy team helps owners and custodians of historic buildings to understand their properties, how to care for them and how they can make sensitive change to achieve sustainable places.

This document has been prepared by Purcell for Blueprint for All to inform their 'Connecting People and Places Project' (2019-2021), which sets out to question how BAME communities have had a voice in the planning and design of sites

that are significant for them. In response to this initiative, the document intends to set out the guiding principles of heritage consultancy, for reference and use as a point of departure only, rather than imposing a strict rubric to follow. Crucially, it aims to be accessible to a range of audiences interested in historic buildings but particularly those considering engaging with the planning system including custodians, community groups, homeowners, shopkeepers and developers.

This framework is structured around three main sections: how historic buildings are protected, managing change to historic buildings and understanding historic buildings.



Great Court, British Museum, London

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Canterbury Cathedral Cloister

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SIGNIFICANCE

Before discussing the framework for the protection of the historic built environment, we must first look at the concept of significance, which lies at the heart of legislation regarding heritage. 'Significance' is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place.



Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities ask for a description of the significance of 'heritage assets' (buildings or areas of heritage interest) in order to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. This description of significance should include any contribution made by the asset's setting.

Why is significance important?

- For drawing together and spelling out the heritage values of a building
- In influencing decisions about a building's future
- In identifying potential for positive change
- For facilitating an understanding of what matters and why before taking major decisions
- To avoid erosion of character in a historic building
- In allowing for a design dialogue
- For establishing an informed assessment of impact
- For adding weight to your case at planning

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

DEFINING SIGNIFICANCE

Significance has been defined variously (but along similar lines) as:

- *Significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups. (Burra Charter)*
- *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. (NPPF)*
- *Special architectural and historical interest (Planning Act)*
- *The idea of 'significance' lies at the core of these principles. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape. (Conservation Principles)*
- *The purpose of significance is to help identify and assess the attributes which make a place of value to us and our society. (James Semple Kerr, Conservation Plan)*

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

People value historic places in many different ways; Historic England's guidance, *Conservation Principles*, breaks significance into four heritage values, which are used to assess a building's significance or heritage interest. Each of these values can make a positive or negative contribution to significance.

- Evidential
- Historic
- Aesthetic
- Communal

The following section looks at each heritage value and includes questions to consider when assessing these values.

Evidential

The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. Evidential value derives from the potential for archaeology, and physical clues in building fabric, to reveal information. The less that is known about a building or site, the greater evidential value it holds. Likewise, where more information is known about a building, the evidential value is lower. The ability to interpret the evidence in physical remains is reduced in proportion to the extent of its removal or replacement.

- Archaeological value – are there archaeological remains or potential for archaeological deposits on the site or nearby?
- Documentary evidence - do documentary resources and historic plans provide useful evidence about the building's historic development?
- What does the building fabric tell you? Does it evidence phases of change or particular construction techniques?
- Has the evidence been partly removed or replaced?



Brunel Museum in Rotherhithe, London

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

Historic

The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This value depends on visibility in a way that evidential value (for example, buried remains) does not and tends to be illustrative or associative. The illustrative value of places is often greater if they incorporate the first, or only surviving, example of an innovation, whether related to design, technology or social organisation. Association with a family, person, event or movement gives historical value a particular resonance, and association with the development of other aspects of cultural heritage (literature, art, music, film), informs people's responses to these places. Historical values are harmed where adaptation has concealed or obliterated them. The use of a place for its original purpose, for example as a place of worship or recreation, makes a major contribution to its historical values.



Christ Church Gate, Canterbury



Bodleian Library, Oxford

- How historic is the fabric and how has it evolved?
- What function did the building serve originally and does it continue to perform this function??
- Does the original circulation remain?
- Is the building a good or rare survival of a particular building type?
- Does the building illustrate a particular movement or style? Or historical and cultural context?
- Was the building innovative in anyway?
- Does the building have technological importance?
- Are there any important associations with notable families, patrons, architects or engineers?
- Does the building contain associated objects and collections that are of importance?

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

Aesthetic

The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Aesthetic values can result from conscious design, including artistic endeavour, equally, they can be the seemingly incidental outcome of the way a place has evolved, piecemeal, over time. Design value embraces composition, materials, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship. The more organic forms of an urban or rural landscape, the relationship of vernacular buildings and their materials to their setting or the juxtaposition of contrasting buildings are also important. The appearance of a place is often enhanced by the passage of time.



Examples of characterful materials and architectural features

- What character does the building have and what characterful architectural features survive?
- Does the building have a legible, historic plan form?
- Do the elevations have an interesting architectural form or composition?
- Does the building employ local vernacular stylistic features and materials?
- Is the building exemplar of an architectural style?
- Does the building have group value with other buildings nearby?
- How does the building sit within its setting?
- Does the building contain art/ furniture collections?
- What prominent formal or informal views are there towards the building?
- Are there any features that detract from the building's aesthetic value?



Lido Tower at Cliftonville, Margate

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED



The National Gallery



Sandhurst War Memorial, Kent

Communal

The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values but tend to have additional aspects. Communal values are more intangible than the other values and are not always immediately obvious or demonstrated in the built fabric. Commemorative and symbolic values are demonstrated by war and other memorials, raised by community effort, but some buildings can symbolise wider symbolic values, such as the Palace of Westminster. Social values stem from places with a particular identity, distinctiveness, or social hub. Social values are not always clearly recognised by those who share them and may only be articulated when the future of the place is threatened; they can also be a driving force for the re-creation of lost places with high symbolic value. They may relate to an activity associated with the place rather than with its physical fabric. Social values are less dependent on the survival of historic fabric than the other values. Spiritual value is often associated with places of longstanding veneration or worship or wild places with few obvious signs of modern life.

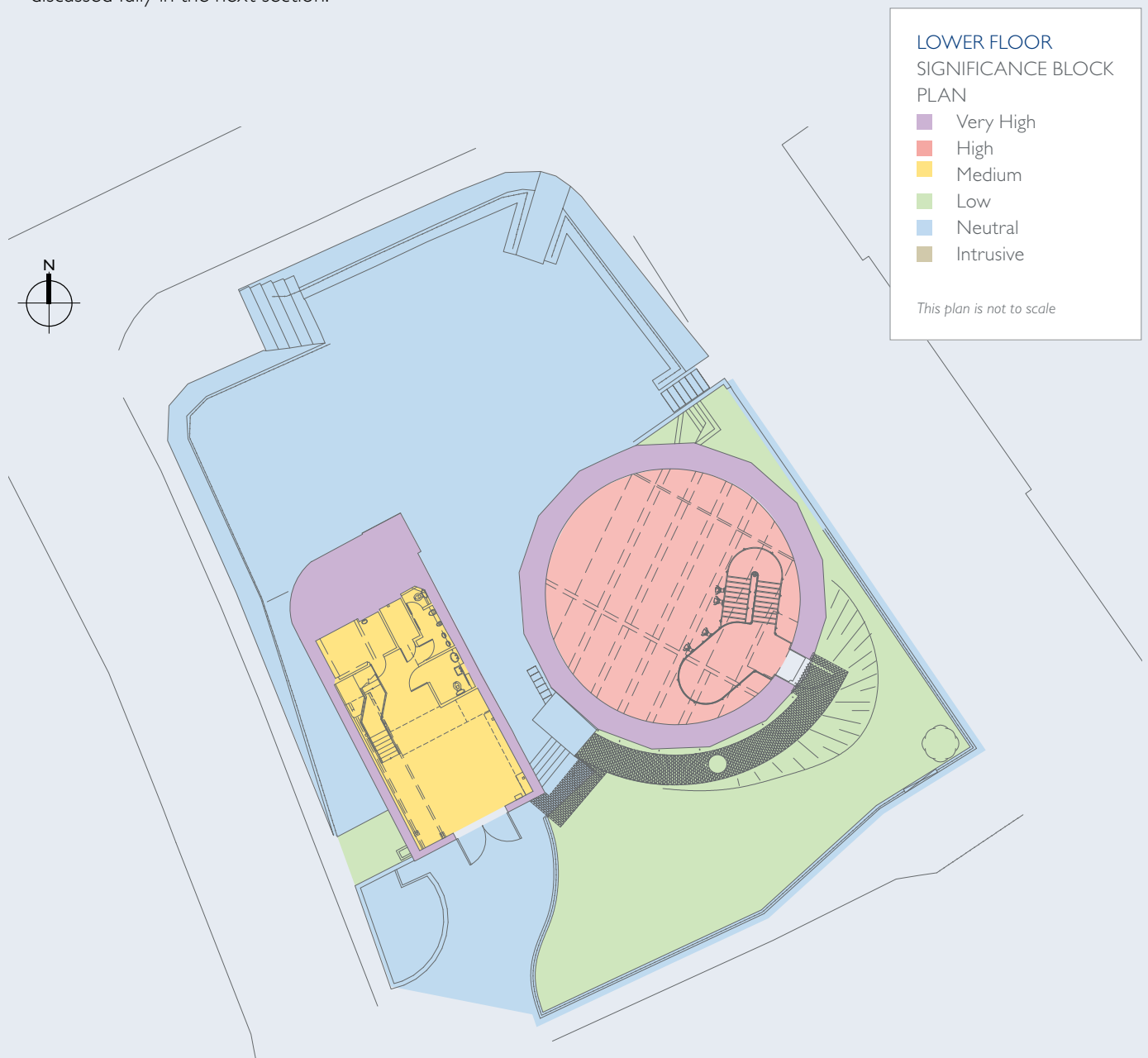
- What individuals and groups value the place and why?
- Who works at or visits the building?
- Is the building used by particular groups, societies or charities?
- Does the building have a positive contribution to a busy high street or town square? Is it a landmark building?
- Is the building an object of civic pride?
- Does it feature in the collective memory of residents, inhabitants or locals?
- Does the building host events? Is it a venue?
- Is the building within an important gathering place?

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

SIGNIFICANCE PLANS

- Plans can be drawn up to represent the significance of a building or a site.
- The internal and external walls, and sometimes interiors, are coloured to indicate high, medium, low, neutral or intrusive value ; comments can be added to provide another layer of detail.
- For a wider site, a significance block plan may be drawn up.
- Significance plans strive to distil all four heritage values into one drawing (this can be difficult where elements of a building have conflicting heritage values)

A building's significance is recognised by heritage designations, discussed fully in the next section.



THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT



The Royal Society of Sculptors, London

What is a 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. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). 99.3% of England's population live within 1 mile of a designated heritage asset.

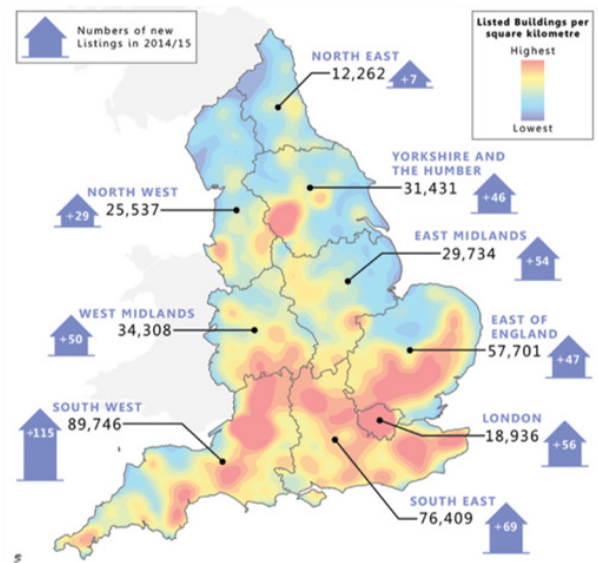
HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Designated heritage assets are buildings, structures or sites formally selected and given protection under law or policy. These designations are recorded by the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).

There are over 500,000 entries on the National Heritage List for England:

- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Protected Wreck sites
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Protected Battlefields
- World Heritage Sites



WHAT DOES LISTING MEAN?

- Every part of a Listed Building is listed, including buildings or structures attached to it
- Associated structures within the 'curtilage' of a Listed Building are potentially covered by the listing
- Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest and brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that it can be protected for the future
- Most buildings before 1850 are listed; buildings less than 30 years old are not normally considered for listing because they have yet to stand the test of time
- Some parts of a building may be more important (have more significance) than others. To propose and achieve consent for change to a Listed Building, you need to establish where this significance lies
- Historic England now offer enhanced list descriptions, which can exempt specific parts of a structure from the listing
- Anyone can nominate a building for listing, however, it is the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) who makes the final decision as to whether a site should be listed or not

For more information on Listed Buildings, see Historic England's Advice Note 10, 'Listed Buildings and Curtilage': <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/listed-buildings-and-curtilage-advice-note-10/heag125-listed-buildings-and-curtilage/>

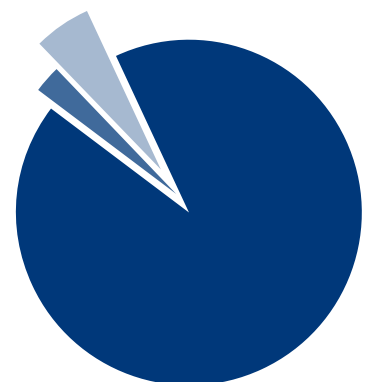
For information on specific listed buildings, 'Search the List' on the National Heritage List for England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>



There are **376,064** listed buildings in England:

Grade I: 2.5%
Grade II*: 5.5%
Grade II: 92%

England has around
7,000
Conservation Areas



HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

What is a Conservation Area?

- An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance for the future
- An area designated by local planning authorities recognising the unique quality of that area as a whole
- Whilst local authorities generally designate conservation areas, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport can get involved
- Derives special interest from topography, materials, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping as well as individual buildings and monuments
- A designated heritage asset under the NPPF, the conservation of which is given great weight in planning permission decisions
- A designated area with broader protection than the listing of individual buildings ensuring that planning decisions address the quality of the landscape in its broadest sense
- Designation introduces a general control over unlisted buildings and the requirement of planning permission for demolition

See Historic England, Advice Note 1 (2nd ed.), Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>



Connaught Street in Bayswater Conservation Area

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Non-designated heritage assets are 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by local planning authorities as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated'. In some areas, local planning authorities have created a 'local list' of 'non-designated heritage assets' as suggested in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (Para 39).

What is Local Listing?

- Local Listing is a means for a community and a local planning authority to identify heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local environment
- Locally Listed assets are of local importance (rather than national) and best practice allows communities to identify local heritage that they would like recognised or protected
- Local Listing does not provide additional planning controls but inclusion on a local list is a material consideration in planning decisions
- Locally listed heritage assets in conservation areas are more strongly protected from demolition than those which are not due to the extra planning controls in place in conservation areas
- A local heritage list may be produced as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) giving it further weight in planning decisions
- Selection criteria, which are generally adapted from those used for national designations, are often used in assessing suitability for local heritage listing. Examples include age, rarity, aesthetic interest, local distinctiveness, group value, archaeological interest, historical association, social and communal value

See Historic England Advice Note 7, Local Heritage Listing:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag018-local-heritage-listing/>



Entrance Pillars to the Victory Park, Addlestone



The Vicarage, No. 34 London Street, Chertsey

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

PLANNING AND HERITAGE PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Brief History of Heritage Legislation

Modern heritage legislation was first established by William Morris and Phillip Webb, when he founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), which formed a mid-19th century reaction against the excessively conjectural intervention of early Victorian restorationists such as James Wyatt and, in France, Eugene-Emanuel Viollet-le-Duc. The founding members were deeply concerned that well-meaning architects were scraping away the historic fabric of too many buildings in their zealous 'restorations'. In 1877, Morris and the SPAB pick up the baton of the international campaign to save St Mark's, Venice.

In the UK, there was a significant reaction to the restoration of St Albans Cathedral. A monastery of the 8th century and later rebuilt in the 11th century by the Normans. The cathedral was in a state of decay in the 19th century; alterations in the 1850s soon went beyond what could be described as repairs to a full-blown 'restoration' – that is – the reversion back to a single, perceived, phase of history and removal of subsequent layers. George Gilbert Scott reconstructed elements with limited historic evidence, creating a very Victorian looking 'Early English' Gothic cathedral. In reaction to similar restoration projects across the country there was a call for protection to save our most significant historic structures – which are generally those scheduled as ancient monuments today.

In 1913, SPAB introduced to Parliament the first effective historic building law on behalf of SPAB and the National Trust. The 1932, 'Town and County Planning Act' provided the first mention of 'buildings of special architectural or historic interest' and formalised the Listing of buildings. In advance of the Second World War, lists were drawn up of buildings to be repaired if bomb damaged due to their national historic value. The 1944 'Town and Country Act' established the Listing of historic buildings on a national basis. In 1967, the Civic Amenities Act first introduced the concept of conservation areas by giving power to local authorities to designate conservation areas – the



St Albans Cathedral prior to the mid-19th century works



St Albans Cathedral today

character or appearance of which it is 'desirable to preserve or enhance'. The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act changed listing by emphasising the need for preservation and specified the need for applications for listed building consent.

Another reason for the increase in heritage protection legislation was the destruction of country houses in the 20th century due to changing social, political and financial conditions. It was increasingly hard to find staff to run the houses after the wars and debilitating inheritance tax levies meant that families had to sell off the family seat or estate. A large country house was no longer a sign of wealth but a massive expense.



Examples showing a range of door and doorcase treatments

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

Current Legislative and Policy Framework

The planning system manages most changes to buildings and land in England, guiding decisions on proposed changes to historic buildings and places, including those protected by listing.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, separated historic buildings and conservation area legislation from the Town and Country Planning Act. This is still the legislation underpinning the planning policy used today.

The Act placed a restriction on works affecting listed buildings, meaning that consent was needed for the demolition, alteration or extension to any listed building.

Sections 69 and 70 provide the current legislation for conservation areas, building on the concept first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published in 2012 and revised in 2018, sets out Government policies on planning within a heritage section, *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*. This section:

- Introduced the terms 'heritage asset' and 'substantial harm'
- Recognises importance of setting
- Lays out importance of:
 - Gathering appropriate evidence
 - A positive strategy for the conservation/ enjoyment of the historic environment
 - Decision-making (assessing significance and impact of proposals)

The NPPF states that: “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”.



The principle front of Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

The following legislation and guidance is used to guide and inform planning decisions:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Local planning policies and supplementary planning documents and guidance (SPDs/ SPGs)
- Historic England, Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance
- Historic Environment, Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 Managing Significance in the Historic Environment
- Historic Environment, Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets
- Historic Environment, Good Practice Advice in Planning: 4 Enabling Development and Heritage Assets
- National Planning Practice Guide



The north front of the National Portrait Gallery, London

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

DECISION-MAKERS

The Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

- Responsible (advised by Historic England) for the identification and designation of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and protected wreck sites

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs)

- Responsible for planning and deciding on developments or changes to historic buildings and places in their areas.
- Most local authorities employ a conservation officer, who offers expert advice on applications, can advise whether extra consent is needed for planned work, and what kind of work might be most appropriate for the building and its setting.
- County Archaeologists advise local planning authorities on the archaeological implications of development proposals.
- LPAs designate conservation areas and draw up local lists of heritage assets

Historic England

- Whilst decision-making generally lies with the local authority (or in extreme cases with the Secretary of State, DCMS), Historic England provides an expert advisory role for managing protection of historic buildings and sites, and/or reuse, within the planning process.
- Historic England must be consulted by local authorities on proposals for Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings; Historic England does not need to be consulted for Grade II buildings, but can get involved where there are serious changes proposed to Grade II listed buildings.
- For Scheduled Monuments, Historic England advises the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on consents and manages the system (in practice, they give permission)
- Historic England can designate conservation areas in London
- Historic England administer the Heritage At Risk register
- They also have a series of Enhanced Advisory Services, including Fast-Track Listing, Listing Enhancements and Extended Pre-Application Advice.

Pre-Application Advice

LPAs offer a paid pre-app advice service. Planning officers from the LPA give informal feedback on how the council will consider any subsequent planning application and any changes that are likely to be needed. Pre-app increases the chance of being granted planning permission and helps minimise the cost of the process.



Leigh Old Town, Southend-on-Sea



Fort Crescent, Margate

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders including community groups, local residents and amenity societies are often consulted during design development and at planning.

Amenity Societies play a large advisory role in heritage conservation. Local planning authorities are obliged to consult the following societies on all applications involving the partial or total demolition of a listed building:

- 01 The Ancient Monuments Society – concerned with historic buildings of all ages and types.
- 02 The Council for British Archaeology – concerned with all historic buildings, but with a particular interest in the archaeology of subterranean and standing structures.
- 03 The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings – concerned mainly with structures dating from before 1700, but also with philosophical and technical aspects of conservation.

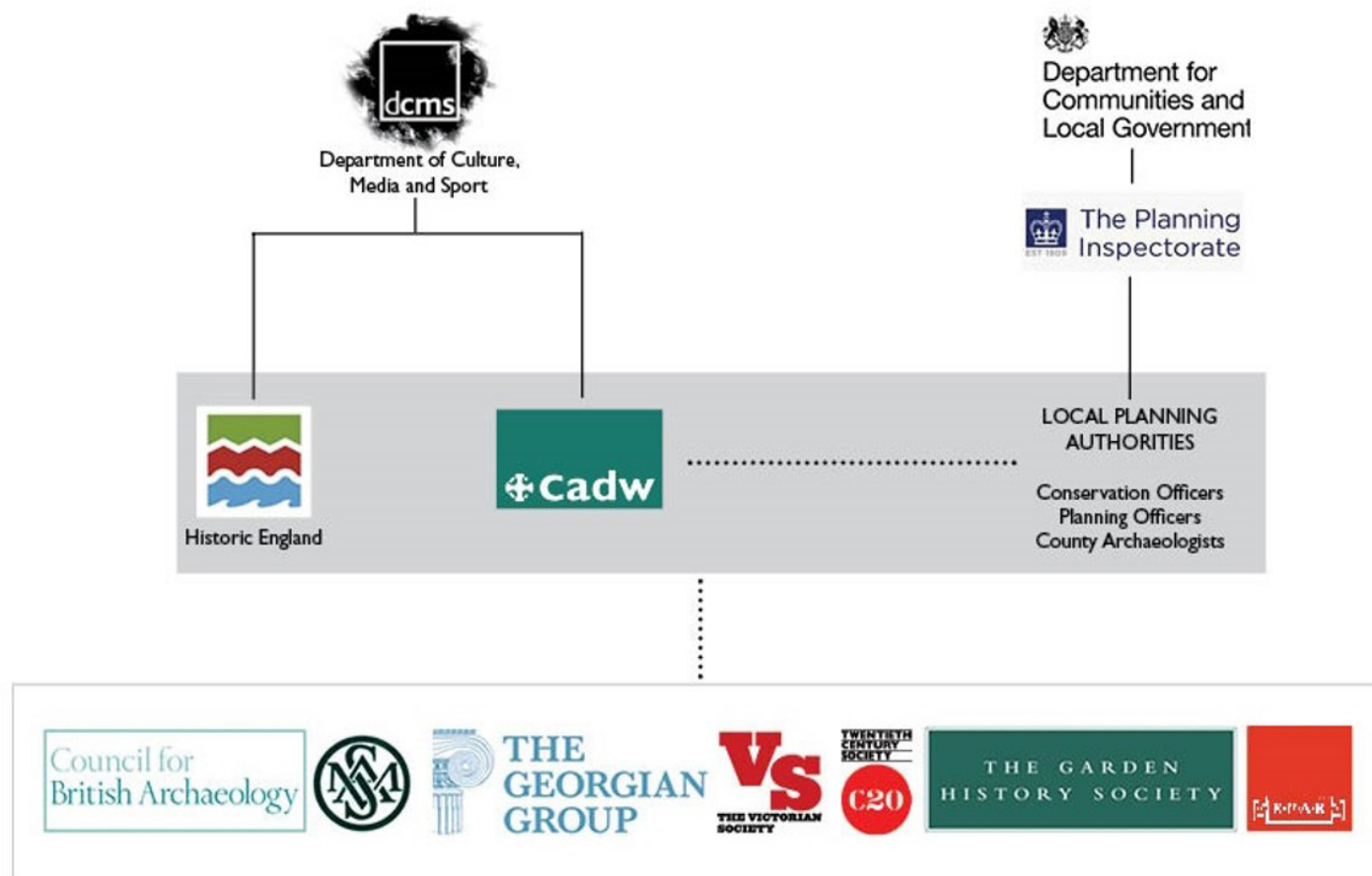
- 04 The Georgian Group – concerned with architecture and architecture-related arts from 1700 to 1840.

- 05 The Victorian Society – concerned with Victorian and Edwardian architecture and architecture-related arts between 1840 and 1914.

- 06 The Twentieth Century Society – concerned with architecture from 1914 onwards.

Local planning authorities are obliged to consult The Gardens Trust on planning applications that are likely to affect a Registered Park or Garden.

There are estimated to be over 1,000 **local civic and preservation societies** in the UK who provide a focus for those in the community who wish to promote and campaign for a better local environment, including through the conservation of local heritage assets.



HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT (LBC) AND PLANNING PERMISSION

Listed Building Consent

In order to alter or extend a listed building in a way that affects its character or appearance as a building of special architectural or historic interest, or demolish it, listed building consent from the local planning authority is needed.

The need for LBC is set out by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

LBC is generally required for:

- Extensions, for example porches, dormer windows and conservatories
- Demolition of any part of a listed building, including chimneys or structures within the grounds ('curtilage') of a listed building
- Fixtures, for example satellite dishes, shutters, burglar alarms, meter boxes, soil and ventilation pipes, rainwater pipes and gutters
- External alterations, for example rendering, cladding or painting any part of the building
- Internal alterations, for example the subdivision of rooms or removal of walls and the insertion, alteration, or removal of historic features such as doors, fireplaces, panelling, staircases and decorative mouldings; changing internal decoration may also require consent
- Alterations to 'curtilage' structures such as outbuildings, garden walls and statues
- Substantial repairs where the character of the listed building is changed
- Any repair which is not like for like

LBC is not generally needed for:

- Repairs, particularly if they are on a like-for-like basis (identical in every respect of design, techniques, materials) However, it is advisable to discuss with the LPA / conservation officer as to whether LBC is required as for example the replacement of a substantial section of timber from a 17th century timber mullioned window with matching new timber might be considered to affect the character of the listed building, requiring LBC.

Unauthorised work is a criminal offence and individuals can be prosecuted. A planning authority can insist that all work carried out without consent is reversed.

Planning permission may be needed alongside Listed Building Consent.

Planning permission

The requirement for planning permission is complex.

Planning permission is generally required if you want to:

- Erect a new building
- Make a major change to the external appearance of a building, such as an extension
- Change the use of a building
- Demolition in a conservation area

Planning permission is not needed for:

- Permitted development – many minor works (although permitted development rights are restricted in conservation areas and may be further restricted through an Article 4 Direction
- Internal changes

Listed Building Consent will also be needed if the work is to a Listed Building.

*Skylights on front roof slopes and TV aerials
in a conservation area*



HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

HERITAGE REPORTS

Purcell's heritage consultancy team provides general advice and guidance as well as specific reports and research where needed. Our reports have a variety of uses – from heritage statements and impact assessments for Listed Building Consent, to Conservation Plans for National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) projects. The reports are the direct output of our engagement at an early stage into project discussions and development. Some of the report types that we produce are detailed below:

Statements of Significance

As assessment of what makes a place special (explained through the heritage values discussed previously) and where there is capacity for change, including visual representations.

Conservation Plans

- Provide an in-depth understanding of the site
- Can be used to inform future management and applications for funding

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

- Review of a conservation area to assess its characteristics, opportunities and provide management guidance
- Provide design guidance and policies to key stakeholders relating to development
- Can be funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund

Townscape Heritage Assessments

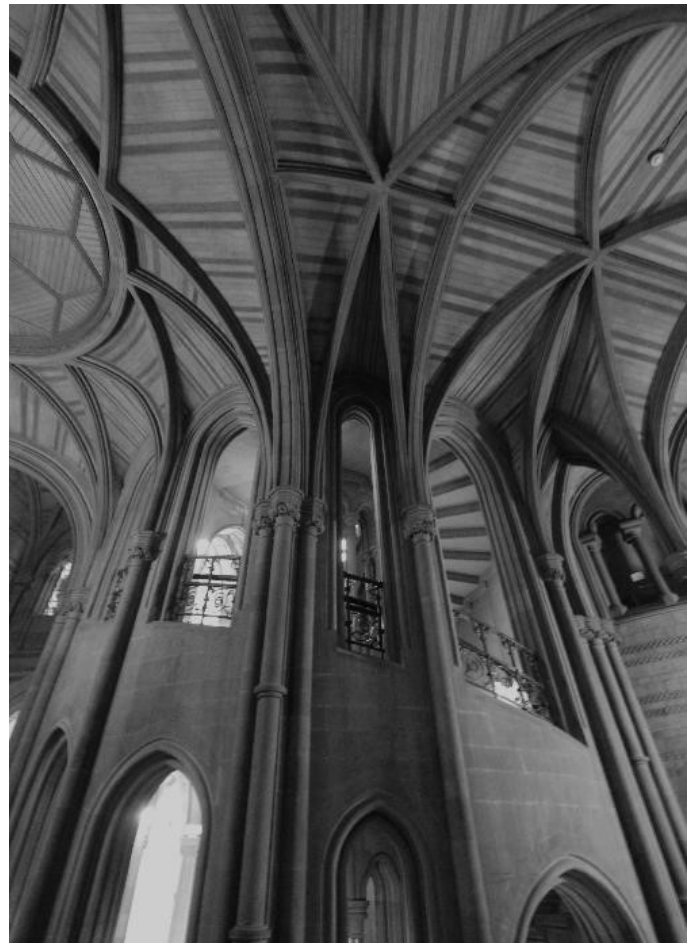
- Assessment looking at the setting and views within the vicinity of a historic asset or development and contribution they make to special interest

Building Recording

- Can be provided as a condition of planning prior to change or demolition of a building or part of a building
- To inform decisions relating to the approval or implementation of a scheme of development as part of the planning or conservation process
- To promote the understanding and appreciation of historic buildings



Semi-detached Victorian houses in Canterbury



Manchester Town Hall

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments

- Desk-based investigation to understand the archaeological potential of a site and assess the impact of the proposed impact on the significance of the historic environment, supported by Geographic Information System (GIS) visual representations

Heritage Statements / Heritage Impact Assessments

- Heritage Statements or heritage impact assessments are required for planning applications or listed building consent applications involving heritage assets and are used in pre-app discussions and decision-making by local authorities and Historic England.
- The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the assets and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- An assessment of significance (with as much historical background as appropriate), an assessment of the impact of the proposed works on this significance and a justification for any proposed harm.
- Heritage Statements can sometimes be incorporated within the Design and Access Statement.
- Principles for assessing impact
 - Harm should be avoided where possible, if proposals do not conserve and/ or enhance, they are not fully achieving NPPF objectives
 - Harm must be necessary – can it be carried out in another way or in another location? Is it the minimum required to achieve its aims?
 - Harm needs clear justification, evidence (significance assessment) is needed
 - Where necessary and justified, harm must be outweighed by public benefits brought by the scheme



The Leas Conservation Area, Southend-on-Sea



Barking Town Hall in Abbey and Barking Town Centre Conservation Area

HOW HISTORIC BUILDINGS ARE PROTECTED

MITIGATION DURING CHANGE

The NPPF (paragraph 195) establishes that substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset is not acceptable unless necessary to achieve substantial public benefits. The next paragraph (196) states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be outweighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Essentially, sometimes harm to the significance of a heritage asset is unavoidable in order to ensure its long term reuse. This harm can be justified through either/ both wider heritage and public benefits of a scheme. The justification for harm should be set out in the heritage impact assessment.

Examples of heritage benefits include sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset and securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Public benefits could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the NPPF (paragraph 8). Public benefits should stem from the proposed development and should benefit the public at large and not just be a private benefit. Benefits do not, however, always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

Examples of public benefits include:

- Increasing public access (including inclusive access) to a building,
- New hospital provision



Fitzroy Square, London



The Ram Brewery in Wandsworth, London, undergoing conversion

REPAIR, RESTORATION, ALTERATION

Conservation is defined as the process of sustaining and enhancing the significance of our heritage – we either need to leave our heritage assets in the same state we found them, or somehow enhance those qualities or elements which make them special. This could be through a good repair, restoration or it could be through new interpretation or a high-quality new use and associated works.

Repair is work beyond the scope of maintenance, to remedy defects caused by decay, damage or use, including minor adaptation to achieve a sustainable outcome, but not involving alteration or restoration. Repair is usually carried out to sustain the significance the building, equally important in most cases to keeping the building in use, which is the best way to safeguard its future.

Repair necessary to sustain the heritage values of a significant place is normally desirable if:

- There is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposals on the significance of the place; and
- The long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future; and
- The proposals are designed to avoid or minimise harm, if actions necessary to sustain particular heritage values tend to conflict.

MANAGING CHANGE TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Restoration is returning a building to a known earlier state, on the basis of compelling evidence, without conjecture.

Historic England guidance details that restoration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- The effect of restoration work upon the heritage values of the building is weighed up
- There is compelling evidence for the restoration work
- The form of the building as it currently exists is not the result of a historically significant event.
- The proposed work respects previous forms of the place
- The maintenance implications of the proposed restoration are considered to be sustainable

New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- There is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;
- The proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
- The proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;
- The long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.



A building in disrepair in Canterbury Conservation Area

REUSE AND REGENERATION

The re-use of historic buildings is pivotal to sustainable development and re-development. Essentially, it is better to use what is there than waste effort and resource that went into the initial construction by replacing it with something else. Generally, traditional building types are adaptable, and the sensitive adaptation, and alteration of existing buildings can offer comforting familiarity alongside the excitement and the technological advancements of the new.



*Converted buildings
at Swindon Railway
Works, now functioning
as a Museum and
a shopping outlet*



MANAGING CHANGE TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Brierfield Mill, Lancashire

REASONS TO RE-USE AN EXISTING BUILDING:

- The historic environment can play an important role in regenerating cities through investment in heritage.
 - Reusing existing buildings is a simple way of achieving sustainability by saving waste and reducing the need for new building materials and demolition.
 - New large-scale developments risk losing the fine grain that characterises historic areas by amalgamating plots, straightening silhouettes and reducing the mix of uses in an area.
 - Reusing buildings and adapting landscapes helps reinforce a sense of place; investing in historic buildings and streetscape can strengthen an area's distinctive identity.
 - Reused buildings can often be sold for a premium compared to similar new-build property as historic buildings are generally seen to be more desirable.
 - Restoring the historic environment creates jobs, revives crafts and helps underpin local economies.
 - An attractive environment can help draw in external investment as well as sustaining existing businesses of all types, not just tourism-related; the majority of businesses consider the quality of the landscape and the environment to be a factor in their performance.
- The historic environment contributes to the quality of life and enriches people's understanding of the diversity and changing nature of their community; people are often hugely proud of their local heritage.
 - Many areas have a rich legacy which contributes to local identity and is an important local, educational resource.
 - Historic places are a powerful focus for community action, historic buildings can act as focal points around which communities will rally and revive their sense of civic pride.
 - The historic environment has an important place in local cultural activities, owing to the role of historic buildings, streets and parks as key venues for local events.

The conversion of redundant industrial sites is particularly popular for the following reasons amongst others:

- *For providing a cost-effective, sustainable option*
- *Large open buildings such as warehouses provide easily adaptable spaces allowing scope to tailor the interior to taste/ function*
- *Industrial sites lend well to a mixture of uses*
- *Their suitability for small businesses especially creative industries*
- *Many industrial sites are of prime historic industrial interest and can form a focal point for local communities and a centrepiece in a larger new-build development*
- *Industrial sites such as mills, breweries and warehouses can symbolise an area's local heritage*

Understanding forms the foundation of all of our heritage consultancy services, enabling us to provide the very best guidance and advice. Balancing curiosity with rigorous research, we re-tell the stories behind the places, to help today's stewards, custodians and decision makers create compelling and appropriate narratives for the future.

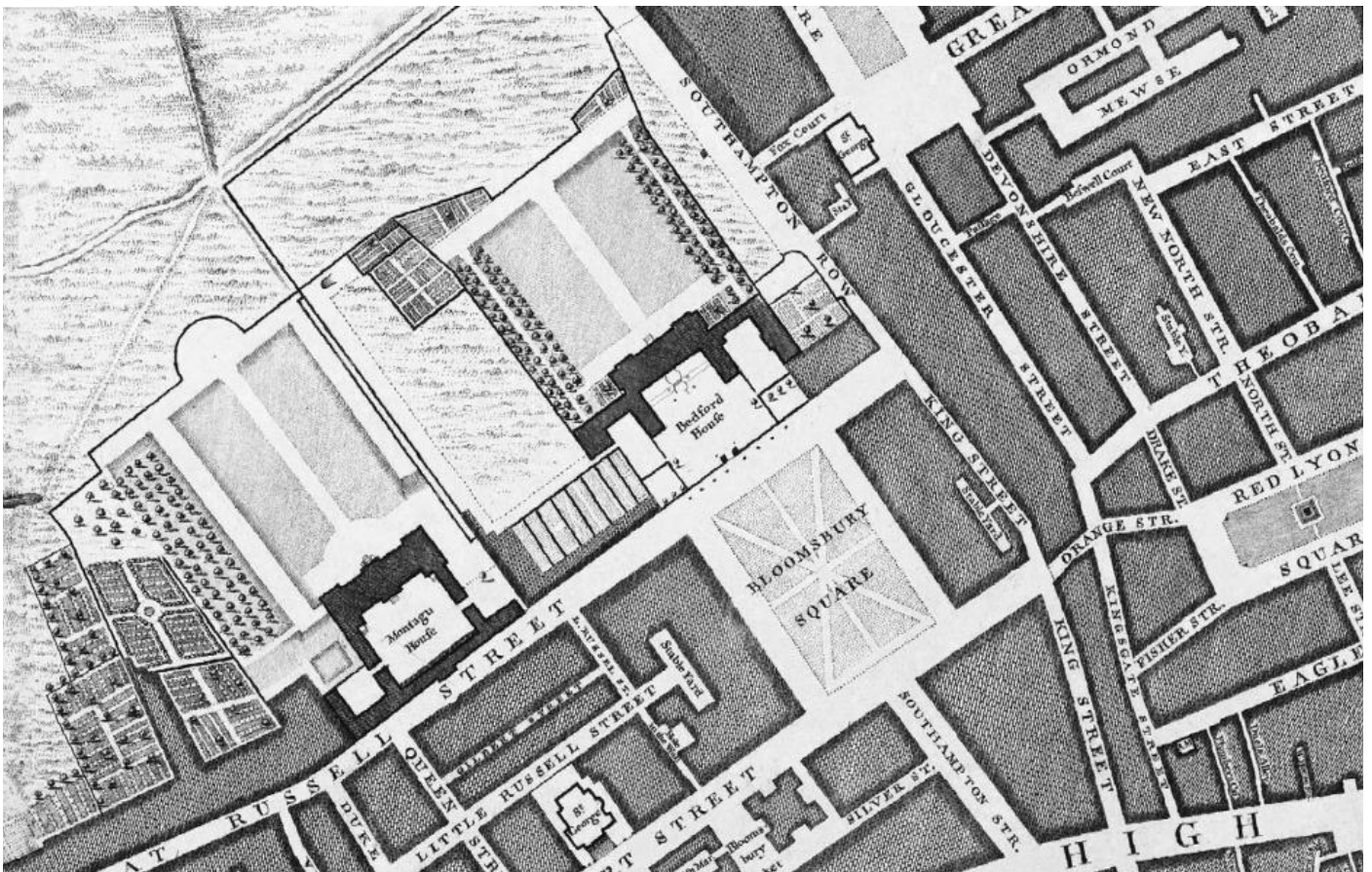
RESEARCH

In order to gain a thorough understanding of a building, our work is driven by research. A solid grounding of a building's historic development informs a judgement of its heritage significance and is vital to a balanced and informed assessment of the impact of development proposals. Historic evidence can therefore be used effectively to demonstrate capacity for sensitive change.

We carry out desk-based and archival research for most projects. For a small project or for a site that is well-understood desk-based resources alone may suffice.

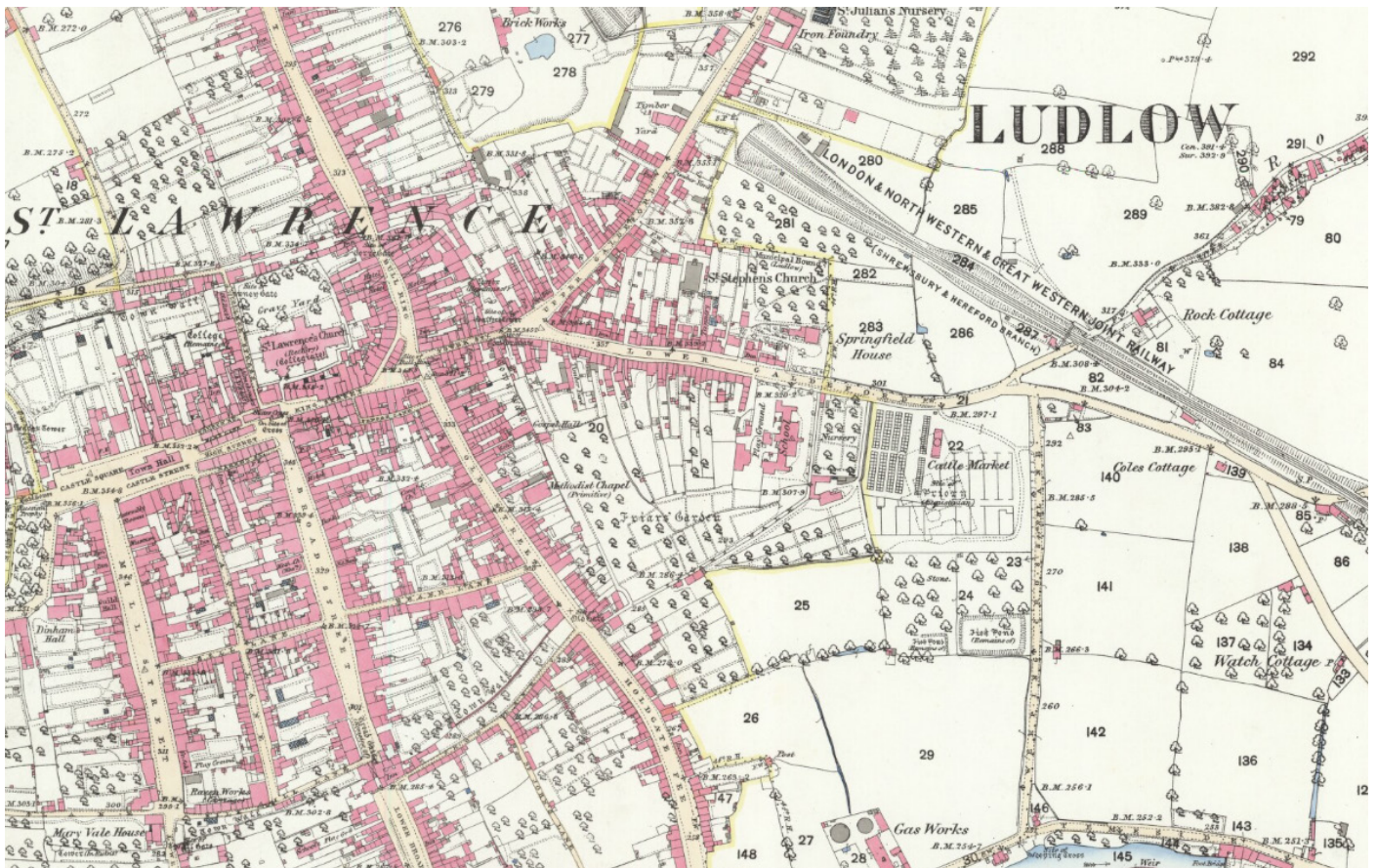
TYPICAL RESEARCH TARGETS

- Find out the the date the building was constructed and consider how it sits stylistically – is it Jacobean? Georgian? Post-War?
- Find out about the building's historic use and occupants as well as the current equivalents
- Chart the historic development of the building from construction to current day
- Identify architectural features that may have been lost
- Draw out associations with similar buildings (typology/ function/ style)



Detail of Bloomsbury Square, John Rocque, Map of London, 1746

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Ordnance Survey Map of Ludlow, 1883-1884

DESK-BASED RESEARCH

Useful desk-based resources include:

- Historic England's National Heritage List for England (we use this as a first port of call to see whether the site or any buildings within its setting are listed):

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True>

- British History Online (for historical resources including the Survey of London and Victoria County Histories):

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

- National Library of Scotland, Map images (for historic OS maps beginning from the 1860s right up to the 1960s):

<https://maps.nls.uk/geolfind/#zoom=5&lat=56.00000&lon=-4.00000&layers=102&b=1&z=1&point=0,0>

- Collage, The London Picture Archive (for historic photographs of London buildings/ streets:

<https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>

- Local Planning Authorities planning portals (to look at past applications relevant to the site, which may include heritage statements/ plans and other useful information)
- Heritage Gateway (for information on historic sites and buildings including Historic Environment Records (HER) data):

<https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results.aspx>

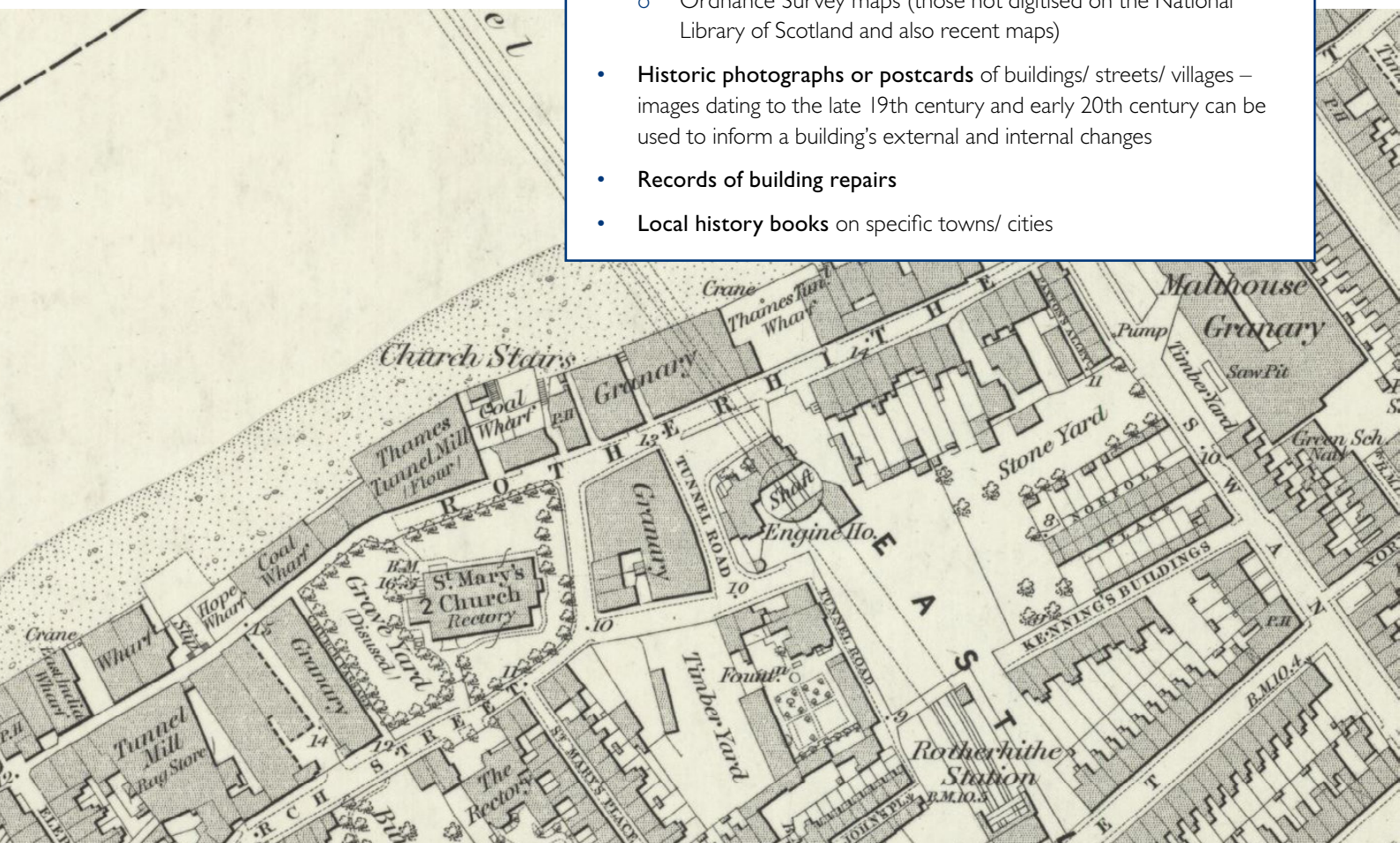
UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Archival Research allows more in-depth research of a site and is often needed to support heritage impact assessments. The National Archives are located at Kew Gardens and provide a useful repository for plans and documents relating to notable buildings, royal palaces and important institutions. Smaller buildings of local interest are better researched at the local archives collections held by each London borough or at, the countryside equivalent, County Record Offices and history centres. Some towns or villages also have their own collection of archives, run by history societies, which can be useful for historic photographs and maps of the settlement and individual properties within it.

Types of document to look for when visiting an archive include:

- Historic plans of the building (original plans, drainage plans, later plans detailing alterations)
- Historic maps of the site and its setting:
 - **Early historic maps** – for early representations of London look at maps by John Rocque (c.1746), Richard Horwood (1792-1799) and Charles Greenwood (1824), outside of London early cartographers mapped many counties, including Andrews and Dury (Kent, Wiltshire, Hertfordshire) and William Faden (Norfolk)
 - **Estate plans** – for layout/ land ownership of country estates
 - **Enclosure Maps**
 - **Tithe Maps** and their accompanying Schedule/ Apportionment – generally date to the 1840s and are important as the first systematic mapping survey of much of the land in England and Wales. As well as mapping buildings, outbuildings and the lie of the land, these give the name of owners and occupiers of land, which is useful for an understanding the history and ownership of a site in the mid-19th century
 - Ordnance Survey maps (those not digitised on the National Library of Scotland and also recent maps)
- **Historic photographs or postcards** of buildings/ streets/ villages – images dating to the late 19th century and early 20th century can be used to inform a building's external and internal changes
- **Records of building repairs**
- **Local history books** on specific towns/ cities

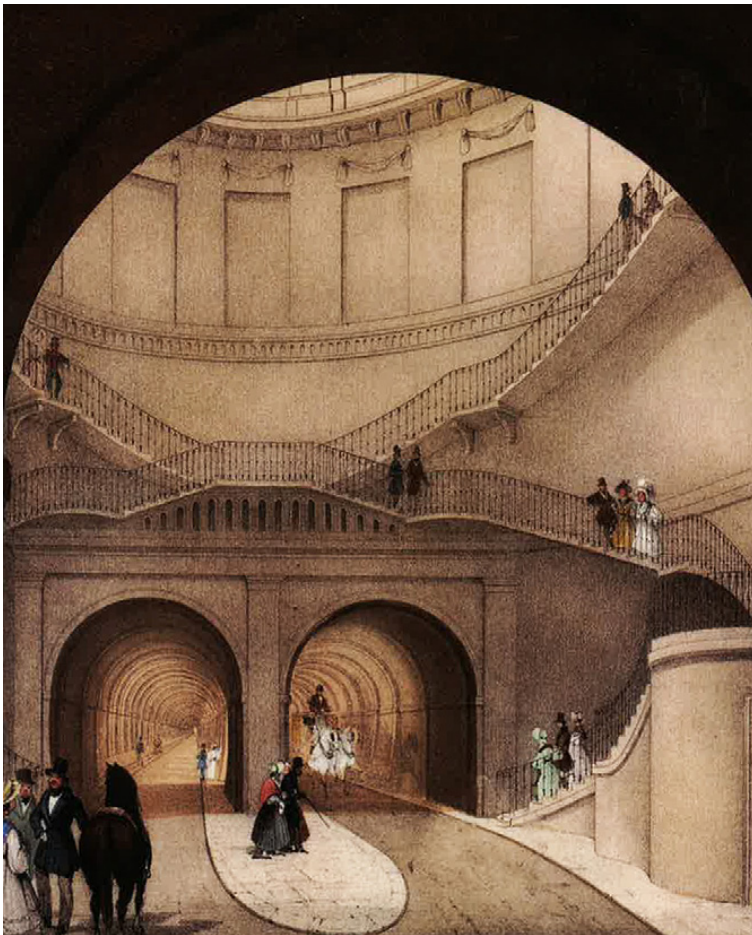


Early OS map showing the south side of the River Thames at Rotherhithe, which adopted a largely industrial nature, populated by mills, granaries and wharves, 1868

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Tithe Map of the Parish of Thornage, North Norfolk

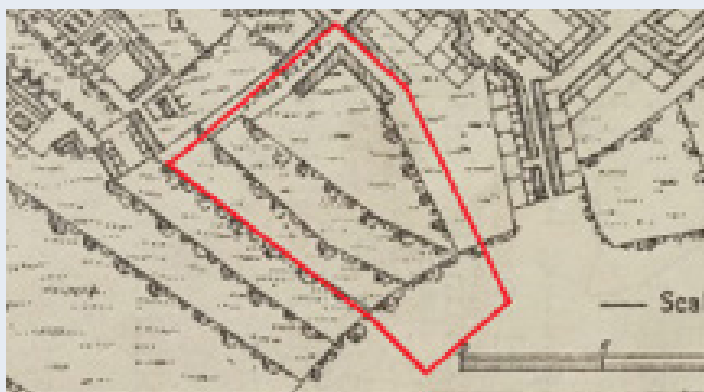


Print dating to the 1830s of the first tunnel built under the River Thames – The Thames Tunnel

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION

Historic map regression is a useful tool when researching historic buildings. It involves the comparison of maps of a specific area dating to different periods in order to trace the historic evolution of the site establishing key changes and alterations over a period of time. The historic map progression below charts the development of the site of Manchester Town Hall.



1751 Plan of Manchester



Green's Map 1794



OS Map 1922-1933

Tip/ If you cannot find historic plans of your building, look for plans of a similar building nearby, for example:

If the building forms part of a terrace, look for plans of other buildings in the same terrace, which may tell you about the typical internal plan of buildings on the street.

Or if the building is a town hall in London dating to the 1930s, look at plans of other town halls of a similar date, to get an impression of typical plan forms of the time, and compare these with what you see onsite.

SITE VISITS

Visiting the site adds an important layer to the understanding of a building and allows you to pick up on factors such as historic use, condition, state of survival and extent of alteration. All of these factors can prove invaluable in the preparation of historic development plans. Visits are also useful for giving an impression of the character of a site's setting.

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

ONSITE FABRIC ANALYSIS:

- Find visual clues as to a building's former use or the specific function of rooms
- Look at the character and style of fireplaces, which may reflect the hierarchy of a terraced house. The front rooms would typically have grand, decorative fireplaces and surrounds indicating their status as entertaining reception rooms, whilst service areas may have simpler or more functional fireplaces and surrounds.
- Does the building/ room have any former working features that can tell you more about former functions. A bread oven? A water heater? A brewing copper?



Historic water heater in a former laundry outhouse



Remains (altered) of a historic bread oven in a former dairy/ bakehouse



Regency fireplace in a former reception room of a terraced townhouse

- Identify phases of alteration externally and internally, note in particular:
 - Change of use
 - Division of building into flats/ HMOs
 - Extensions
 - Addition of floors
 - Rendering/ painting over brickwork
 - Change of access
 - Change of fenestration including loss of original windows and replacement with uPVC units or new openings
 - Removal of historic internal walls
 - Modern internal sub-division
 - Alterations to chimney breast/ fireplace
 - Modern suspended ceilings



Example of uPVC windows



Examples showing a suspended ceiling and modern subdivision

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Remnants of a historic shopfront (retractable canopy, consoles, pilasters)

- Look for signs of lost features, for example:
 - Original cornice/ parapet
 - Elements of a former shopfront – pilasters, consoles, canopies
 - Original sash windows or glazing bars
 - Loss of fireplace/ fireplace surround
 - Loss of cornice

Components of a Traditional Shopfront

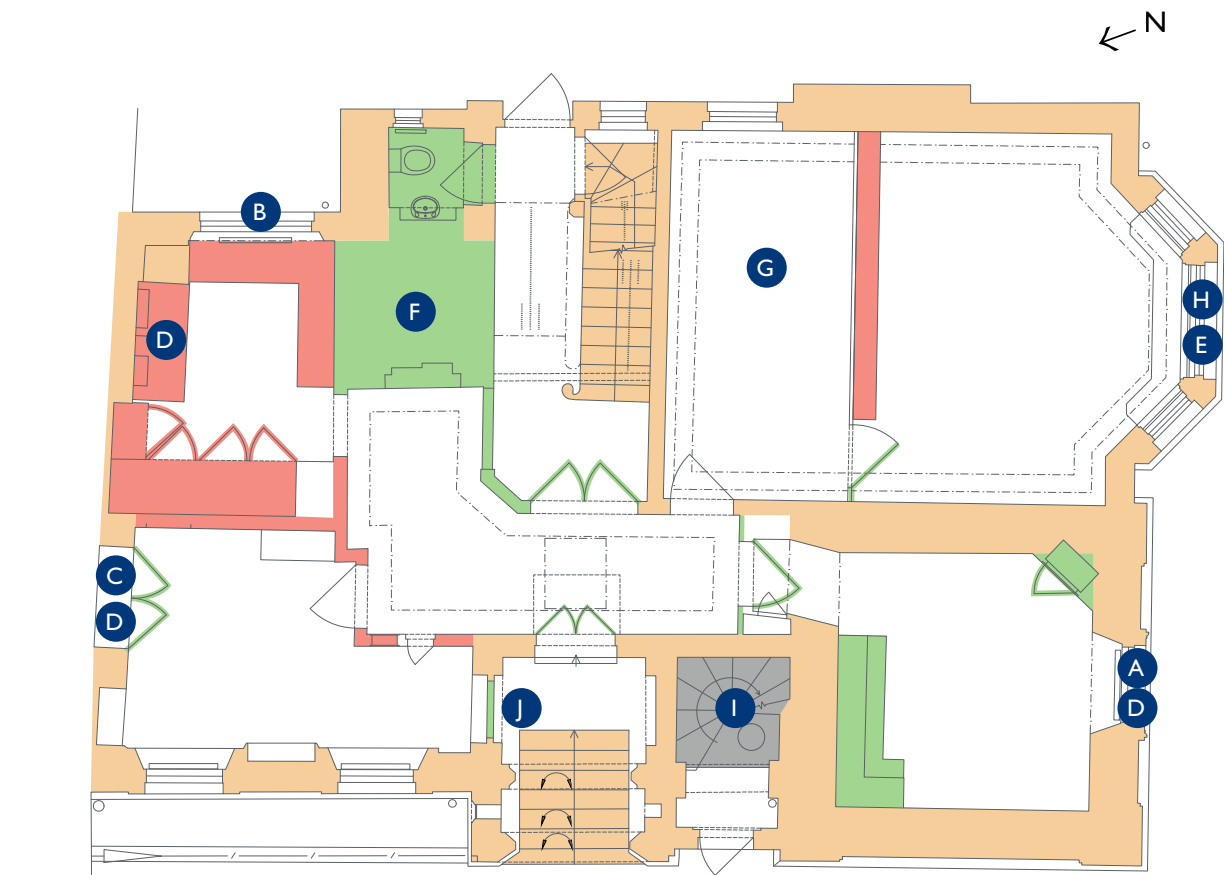


SINGLE SHOPFRONT



DOUBLE SHOPFRONT

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS



HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- Establish the main phases of change present at the building, this may be by century or by smaller intervals of time depending on how much you know about the building
- Assign a colour for each phase of change
- Colour individual walls according to their phase of change, if known internal room spaces can be coloured too.
- Annotations can be useful in providing an additional layer of detail

Result:

- Plans that distil detailed research and site analysis
 - *An efficient and accessible tool that allows a quick understanding of the phases of development at the building*
 - *A visually interesting record of a building's history presented in heritage assessments at planning*

- Original Fabric
- 1978-1980
- Post 1980
- Late 20th Century (Stair fabric)

- A Non-original window
- B Original window enlarged
- C Non-original door
- D Position of original historic fireplace
- E Potentially originally a box bay
- F Lift shaft added in 1978
- G Existing picture rail removed, plaster cornice retained in 1978 and 1980 applications
- H Existing windows overhauled and repainted
- I This stair is a modern concrete replacement of the historic spiral stair; it is not shown on 1945 plans. The stair is labelled 'existing' on the 1978 ground floor plan, suggesting it pre dates 1978. The concrete stair treads and steel central support can be visually dated to the latter part of the 20th century
- J New 'observation window' to porch in 1978

This plan is not to scale

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The site's setting:

- Assess the character of the area and consider how this affects the site – does it provide a positive or negative contribution?
- Does the building form part of a high street or is it in a residential area?
- Does the building have a landscape setting?
- Are there heritage assets nearby?
 - *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*
 - *Listed Buildings*
 - *Registered Parks and Gardens*
 - *Conservation Areas*
- Think about features such as typical building use, scale and massing, materiality, architectural features and detail



Palace Street, Canterbury



Barking Abbey Grounds, London

