**Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology**

**Policy**

**Strategic**

A  London’s heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.

B  Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site’s archaeology.

**Planning decisions**

C  Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.

D  Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

E  New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.

**LDF preparation**

F  Boroughs should, in LDF policies, seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London’s environmental quality, cultural identity and economy as part of managing London’s ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

G  Boroughs, in consultation with English Heritage, Natural England and other relevant statutory organisations, should include appropriate policies in their LDFs for identifying, protecting, enhancing and improving access to the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings where appropriate, and to archaeological assets, memorials and historic and natural landscape character within their area.

**Supporting text**

7.29  London’s built and landscape heritage provides a depth of character that has immeasurable benefit to the city’s economy, culture and quality of life. Natural landscapes can help to provide a unique sense of place[1] whilst layers of architectural history provide an environment that is of local, national and world heritage value. It is to London’s benefit that some of the best examples of architecture from the past 2000 years sit side by side to provide a rich texture that makes the city a delight to live, visit, study and do business in. Ensuring the identification and sensitive management of London’s heritage assets in tandem with promotion of the highest standards of modern architecture will be key to maintaining the blend of old and new that gives the capital its unique character. Identification and recording heritage through, for example, character appraisals, conservation plans and local lists, which form the Greater London Historic Environmental Record (GLHER) are essential to this process[2].

7.30  London’s diverse range of designated and non-designated heritage assets contribute to its status as a World Class City.  Designated assets currently include 4 World Heritage Sites, over 1,000 conservation areas, almost 19,000 listed buildings, over 150 registered parks and gardens, more than 150 scheduled monuments and 1 battlefield (Barnet)[3]. Those designated assets at risk include 72 conservation areas, 493 listed buildings, 37 scheduled monuments and 14 registered parks and gardens[4]. The distribution of designated assets differs across different parts of London, and is shown in Map 7.1. London’s heritage assets range from the Georgian squares of Bloomsbury to Kew Gardens (Victorian) and the Royal Parks, and include ancient places of work like the Inns of Court (medieval in origin), distinctive residential areas like Hampstead Garden Suburb (early twentieth century) and vibrant town centres and shopping areas like Brixton and the West End. This diversity is a product of the way London has grown over the 2000 years of its existence, embracing older settlements and creating new ones, often shaped by the age they were developed. This sheer variety is an important element of London’s vibrant economic success, world class status and unique character.

**Map 7.1 Spatial distribution of designated heritage assets**

7.31  Crucial to the preservation of this character is the careful protection and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and their settings. Heritage assets such as conservation areas make a significant contribution to local character and should be protected from inappropriate development that is not sympathetic in terms of scale, materials, details and form. Development that affects the setting of heritage assets should be of the highest quality of architecture and design, and respond positively to local context and character outlined in the policies above.

7.31A Substantial harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset should be exceptional, with substantial harm to or loss of those assets designated of the highest significance being wholly exceptional. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimal viable use. Enabling development that would otherwise not comply with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset should be assessed to see of the benefits of departing from those policies outweigh the disbenefits.

7.31B  When considering re-use or refurbishment of heritage assets, opportunities should be explored to identify potential modifications to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development. In doing this a balanced approach should be taken, weighing the extent of the mitigation of climate change involved against potential harm to the heritage asset or its setting. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of and/or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of that asset should not be taken into account when making a decision on a development proposal.

7.32  London’s heritage assets and historic environment also make a significant contribution to the city’s culture by providing easy access to the history of the city and its places. For example recognition and enhancement of the multicultural nature of much of London’s heritage can help to promote community cohesion. In addition to buildings, people can perceive the story of the city through plaques, monuments, museums, artefacts, photography and literature. Every opportunity to bring the story of London to people and ensure the accessibility and good maintenance of London’s heritage should be exploited. In particular, where new development uncovers an archaeological site or memorial, these should be preserved and managed on-site. Where this is not possible provision should be made for the investigation, understanding, dissemination and archiving of that asset.

[1]     Natural England London’s Natural Signatures, The London Landscape Framework. Prepared for Natural England by Alan Baxter and Shiels Flynn January 2011

[2]     English Heritage. *Conservation Principles, policies and guidance*. English Heritage, April 2008

[3]     English Heritage Data Set 2010

[4]     English Heritage, *Heritage at Risk*, 2010