



28 Avenue Road, London, NW8 6BU

Townscape Visual Impact Assessment

Dorian A. T. A. Crone BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC

Daniel Cummins MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC

of

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28 Avenue Road – Townscape Visual Impact Assessment

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Contact details: Dorian Crone, datacrone@hotmail.co.uk

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The site of 28 Avenue Road, London, NW8 6BU comprises a large garden space; the house at No. 28 was demolished during the late 1960s, but the late 19th-century lodge house adjoining the entrance driveway fronting Avenue Road remains. The site is located within the Elsworth Road Conservation Area, London Borough of Camden.
- 1.2. The proposals include the erection of a new dwelling on the plot at No. 28 Avenue Road.
- 1.3. The purpose of this document is to establish the visual impact of the proposals on the surrounding townscape. The document establishes a clear understanding of the subject site and its townscape context. Key views towards the subject site and the potential impacts on the townscape which would result as a consequence of the development proposals have been assessed. This assessment complies with the requirements of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019) and the online Planning Practice Guidance in respect of achieving good design and well-designed places.

1.4. Authorship

- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC - Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), ICOMOS UK and Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. He is Chairman of the City Heritage Society and is a member of the City Conservation Area Advisory Committee. Dorian is also a trustee of the Drake and Dance Trusts, and a Scholar of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a panel member of the John Betjeman Design Award and the City of London Heritage Award, and is a Design Review Panel member of the South West Region, the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Lewisham, Islington and Wandsworth, and the Design Council/CABE. Dorian has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award along with a number other public sector and commercial design awards.

- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading, where he specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and estates. Daniel has a Master's degree in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and is a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He has an excellent

working knowledge of the legislative and policy framework relating to the historic environment. Daniel has extensive experience in projects involving interventions to listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, providing detailed assessments of significance and impact assessments required for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission.

2.0. METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA

- 2.1. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) takes into account the good practice guidance outlined in **'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'**, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 3rd Edition, 2013: (GLVIA3); this guidance pertains to urban townscape as much as landscape. The guidance does not provide a detailed universal methodology, but recognises that much of the assessment must rely on professional judgement.
- 2.2. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment also takes into account relevant conservation guidance and principles, namely **Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)** for adopting a broad approach to assessment (see Appendix 1 for an outline of the 5-Step approach described in the guidance), undertaken as a series of steps to assess the contribution of a view and townscape to the significance of heritage assets and the ability to appreciate that significance:
- **Step 1:** Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
 - **Step 2:** Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
 - **Step 3:** Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
 - **Step 4:** Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- 2.3. Historic England's *Setting of Heritage Assets* observes that the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset (paragraph 10). The document also recommends that where complex issues involving views come into play in the assessment of setting – whether for the purposes of providing a baseline for plan-making or for development management – a formal views analysis may be merited.
- 2.4. A site visit was conducted on 18th July 2017 to establish the area from which the subject site may be visible and to identify key viewpoints within the public realm from where the townscape character of the subject site may be best appreciated and understood. Two viewpoints have been carefully selected in order to establish the visual impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Elsworthy Road Conservation Area and on the setting of the adjacent Grade II Registered Primrose Hill (Figure 1). These specific points have been chosen where the proposals might impact on townscape, scale, height, massing, and the settings of any heritage assets. Consideration was given to the historical development

of the area, its physical fabric (building types and materials), and key views to any notable historic buildings.

- Viewpoint 1: Primrose Hill looking South-West;
- Viewpoint 2: Avenue Road looking North-East;



Figure 1: Plan of the views assessed in this report in relation to the subject site (outlined in red).

- 2.5. The TVIA will firstly establish a baseline for each view against which to judge the impact of proposals upon the local townscape. The townscape in each view is described in terms of its constituent elements and character, including development patterns and scale (including use of materials, massing, density and enclosure), any heritage assets, green and open spaces, transport routes and uses; the way in which the townscape is experienced and by whom also forms part of the assessment. In accordance with **Steps 1 and 2** of the Historic England criteria outlined above, the baseline will identify the heritage assets and the degree to which the townscape in the view contributes to an understanding and appreciation of their setting/significance. The extent to which proposals have an impact on the existing townscape character is often related to the sensitivity of the townscape to change. Criteria for assessing townscape sensitivity have been based on a variety of factors and attributes which are generally agreed to influence the existing character and value of the townscape:

Sensitivity	Criteria
Very High	Strong townscape structure and a distinctive intact character exhibiting unity, richness and harmony, and a strong sense of place. Internationally or nationally recognised townscape, e.g. a World Heritage Site, extremely susceptible to minor levels of change.
High	Strong townscape structure, distinctive features and a strong sense of place with some detracting features. Nationally or regionally recognised townscape or high quality and distinctive character, e.g. a conservation area containing a high proportion of listed buildings, susceptible to change.
Medium	Recognisable (perhaps locally recognised) townscape structure with some distinctive characteristics and in a reasonable condition. May be capable of low levels of change without affecting key characteristics.
Low	Undesignated townscape of local value with few distinctive characteristics. May contain elements in a poor state of repair. Capable of moderate levels of change/enhancement.
Negligible	Weak or disjointed townscape structure, capable of high levels of change/enhancement.

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

- 2.6. Using the baseline, the impact of the proposals on the views will be assessed by considering how the townscape and an appreciation and understanding of the setting and significance of identified heritage assets may be changed or affected by reason of the latter's location or design in accordance with **Steps 3 and 4** of the Historic England criteria outlined above. Aspects of design such as scale, height, mass, orientation, palette of materials and landscaping are particularly relevant. The assessment will illustrate how the proposals might affect the elements that make up the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the townscape and its distinctive character, and how observers may be affected by any changes in the content and character of the views. The potential impacts have been categorised as:

Magnitude of Impact	Criteria
Negligible	Impacts considered to cause no material change to the visual quality of the view.
Minimal	Impacts considered to make a limited impact on a townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a minor component of the wider scene that may affect slightly the character and quality of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset.
Moderate	Impacts considered to make an appreciable difference or change the quality of the townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a recognisable new element within the scene that would noticeably have an impact on the quality and character of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset.
Substantial	Impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the townscape where there is a high sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would affect the quality and character of a valued view, the character and quality of a highly sensitive townscape, or the setting of a highly significance heritage asset.

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

- 2.7. Impacts are therefore assessed in terms of the sensitivity of the townscape affected and the magnitude of the impact or change, and whether the impact is considered to be positive, negative or neutral. If the proposals will enhance the character and quality of the townscape, then the impact on heritage significance within the view will be deemed **positive**; however, if they fail to sustain the quality of the townscape in the view by the removal of characterising elements or add new intrusive or discordant features then the impact will be deemed **negative**. If the proposals preserve the quality of the townscape in the view, or where positive and negative impacts are finely balanced then the impact will be deemed **neutral**.
- 2.8. This TVIA has also evaluated the proposals according to the **National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, October 2019)**, in particular Characteristic 1: understanding the history of the area, the settings of heritage assets and the context of the site; and Characteristic 2: reinforcing a coherent and distinctive identity (ref Appendix 2 for details of Characteristics 1 and 2). The application of the principles of good design is considered to reduce or remove potential harm and provide enhancement. This assessment therefore also takes into account the eight principles of the **Building in Context Toolkit** (2001) which was formulated by English Heritage and the Design Council (formerly CABI) to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts; the principles are listed in Appendix 3.

Summary of Townscape Context

- 2.9. 28 Avenue Road is located on the north side of Avenue Road diagonally opposite the junction with Acacia Road. The townscape of Avenue Road reflects that of a wealthy residential suburb characterised by the spacious leafy street and large plots, and an open urban grain. Detached and semi-detached villas and houses of two to three storeys (often with a mansard roof and dormers) predominate; the houses are set back from the road with strong well defined front boundaries often with high walls or gates. The houses have differing styles but similar form, height and size. The prevailing palette of materials is dark red or brown brickwork, or painted stucco finishes echoing carved stone buildings. Most of the villas on Avenue Road within the Conservation Area are replacements, the originals having been demolished and rebuilt, with noticeable rebuilding taking place from the 1930s onwards in the Neo-Georgian style of architecture.
- 2.10. The rear gardens of the buildings on the north side of Avenue Road and Radlett Place (north-east boundaries) back onto Primrose Hill, a Grade II Registered Park which is particularly notable for its panoramic views towards the City of London. The entry on the Register notes that the 19th-century housing developments to the north and west sides are largely screened by trees planted to the boundaries of the park and within rear gardens.

3.0. TOWNSCAPE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.0. Introduction – Design Assessment

- 3.0.1. The Government's **National Design Guide** ("NDG") has informed the designs of the proposals, as well as this Townscape Visual Impact Assessment. Drafted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (October 2019), the NDG is the national planning practice guidance for "beautiful, enduring and successful places". It states that the components for good design are: the layout (or masterplan); the form and scale of buildings; their appearance; landscape; materials; and their detailing. The NDG focuses on what it terms the "ten characteristics", the first two of which are particularly relevant to this scheme: Context and Identity (ref. Appendix 2).
- 3.0.2. The proposed Neo-Georgian building is considered to relate well to the local context of the site (C1) by nature of taking full account of the height, scale, detailing and use of materials of the built form which characterises the townscape of Avenue Road (I1, I2). The proposed architectural language, proportions, materials, detailing, height and scale have been a direct response to the prevailing local character (as described in 2.9 and 2.10 above), ensuring that the building sits comfortably in its context within the Conservation Area and adjacent to Primrose Hill (C2, I2). The Neo-Georgian and classical form, use stucco render, classical proportions and hierarchy, horizontal subdivisions of the elevations, openwork balustrading to the parapet, traditional mansard roof covered with grey slate, and well-proportioned timber sash windows recessed within the window openings, are all distinguishing features of the surrounding multi-phased high quality architecture on Avenue Road (I1). The height of the building will be limited to two storeys and a mansard storey to reflect the local context; the height of the ridge line will be marginally lower than the adjacent Neo-Georgian mansion at 1 Radlett Place (I1). The proposed new building is therefore considered to sustain and enhance the quality and character of the area (I2) and will reinforce a more positive and coherent identity in the local townscape by the considered use of form, scale, design, materials and details (I3).
- 3.0.3. This impact assessment has also evaluated the proposals according to the eight principles of the **Building in Context Toolkit** (2001) which was formulated by English Heritage and CABI/Design Council to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts (ref. Appendix 3). It is considered that the proposals have taken full account of the eight principles, particularly in understanding the history of the place and lie of the land (Principle 2), designing the replacement building so it sits happily in the pattern of existing development (Principle 4), respecting the important views and vistas from Primrose Hill (Principle 5), respecting the scale of neighbouring buildings within the Sub-Area (Principle 6), and using high quality materials as found on existing buildings (Principle 7).

3.1. Viewpoint 01 – Primrose Hill looking South-West

3.1.1. Baseline View



Figure 1a: Baseline View 01 looking south-west from Primrose Hill

This view is taken looking south-west from Primrose Hill, a Grade II Registered Park. This western perimeter path links the main south-west entrance to the park from Prince Albert Road to the north entrance at Elsworthy Terrace, with radiating paths to the summit of the hill where panoramic views of the City of London are a distinctive feature of the park. This view is therefore experienced both statically and kinetically by users of the park; it is partially framed by the ornamental trees which line the path.

The view largely comprises the open space of the park below the western slopes of the hill which are used for sports pitches. The park is enclosed on this western side by a dense belt of tree planting located both within the park and within the rear gardens of the houses which front Avenue Road. The tree planting filters views of the houses even during the winter, as shown in this view. The distinctively Neo-Georgian two-storey with mansard storey house at 1 Radlett Place can be glimpsed through the trees to the right of the view in winter, whilst to the left of the view is the more prominent four-storey plus mansard storey Neo-Georgian mansion block on Rudgwick Terrace which is visible in both summer and winter. The subject site at No. 28 is screened by the dense tree planting and no features are discernible in this view.

The view has medium sensitivity – there are distinctive townscape characteristics in a reasonable condition which are experienced by a large number of users of the park both statically and kinetically. There is some capacity for change given the neutral contribution made by the site of the proposed house at No. 28 which cannot be seen in this view.

3.1.2. Proposed View South-West from Primrose Hill



Figure 1b: Proposed View 01

The view following the building of the proposed house on the subject site can be seen in Figure 1b. Like the house at 1 Radlett Place and others fronting Avenue Road, the proposal will be almost entirely screened by the double layer of tree planting within the park and within the rear garden. The planting within the rear garden against the boundary is proposed to be enhanced, thereby further limiting the visual impact of the proposal – even during the winter months as illustrated here. It is unlikely the proposed house would be visible from this location during the summer months when the trees are in leaf. Any glimpses during the winter months would suggest the presence of a Neo-Georgian house, the height and scale of which reflect that of its neighbour at 1 Radlett Place. The use of stucco, grey slate and architecturally literate detailing and proportionality of the elevational treatments will ensure the proposed building blends comfortably within the filtered townscape context that contributes positively to this aspect of the setting of the Registered Primrose Hill.

The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be negligible to minimal and neutral, as there would largely be no material change to the townscape in the view, with only minimal glimpses of the proposal which would form a very minor component in the view during the winter months. The proposal would sustain the character and quality of the townscape in the view, whilst also sustaining an appreciation and understanding of this aspect of the setting of the Registered Park.

3.2. Viewpoint 02 – Avenue Road looking North-East

3.2.1. Baseline View



Figure 2a: Baseline View 02 looking north-east from Avenue Road

This view is taken from the busy suburban thoroughfare of Avenue Road opposite the driveway entrances to Nos. 28 and 30. The view would be experienced kinetically by road users and pedestrians.

The view is dominated by the Neo-Georgian house at No. 30, which was built during the 1930s on the site of a mid-19th century Italiante villa; this building has been identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Its Neo-Georgian form and detailing, height and palette of materials reflect the prevailing character of the built form on Avenue Road. The original driveway and gates to No. 28 remain in situ in the background behind the modern boundary fronting the street. In the foreground of the view is the late 19th century former lodge house built for the house at No. 28; its distinctive architectural form and detailing make it somewhat of a landmark building in the townscape of Avenue Road. The site of the demolished house at No. 28 (now proposed to be redeveloped) cannot be seen from the public realm in this kinetic view; it is screened by the dense tree planting around the entrance driveway and by the house at No. 30.

The view has low to medium sensitivity – there is some recognisable townscape structure with distinctive characteristics – the buildings and the greenery in the view make positive contributions to the character and quality of the area. There is some capacity for change given the neutral contribution made by the site of the proposed house at No. 28 which cannot be seen in this kinetic view.

3.2.2. Proposed View North-East from Avenue Road

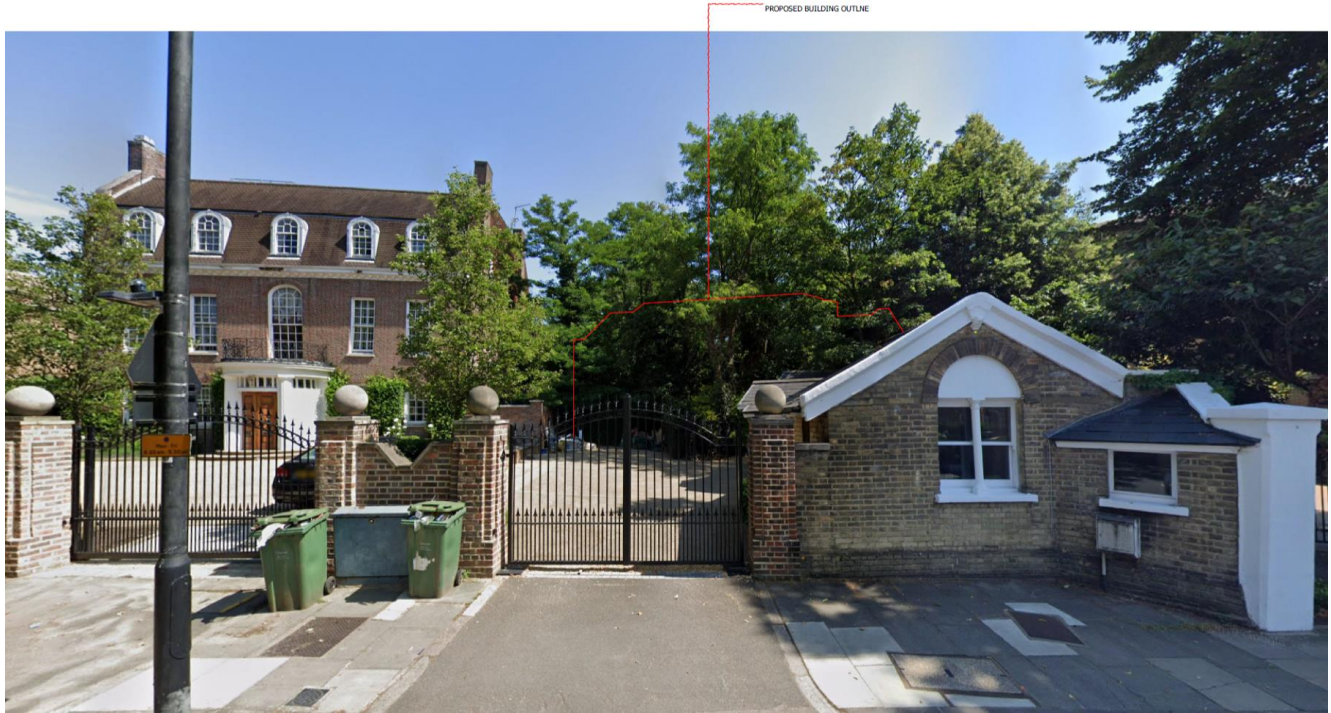


Figure 2b: Proposed View 02

The view following the proposed redevelopment of the house site at No. 28 can be seen in Figure 2b. The proposed street frontage of the site, comprising built and green elements which contribute positively to the quality and character of the townscape (including the former lodge) will be sustained. The proposed house will not be visible in this kinetic view from Avenue Road owing to the appropriate height and scale, and the dense tree planting in the middle ground which is proposed to be enhanced, thereby further reducing any visual impact. Any passing glimpses of the proposed house during the winter months would suggest the presence of a stuccoed Neo-Georgian house within the historic plot of No. 28 which reflects the context of the prevailing architectural language and detailing of Avenue Road and which will form an appropriate heavily filtered backdrop through the trees.

The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be negligible and neutral to positive, as there would be no material change to the townscape in the view. The proposal would sustain the character and quality of the Conservation Area townscape in the view.

4.0. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment has reviewed the visual impact of the proposed new building at 28 Avenue Road on the local townscape. **The quality and sensitivity of the townscape in the two assessed views is generally low to medium, but capable of some change** given the neutral contribution made by the subject site as existing as a result of it being almost entirely screened in views from the public realm on Avenue Road and Primrose Hill. Taking account of the fact that the proposed building may be glimpsed during the winter months when the trees are not in leaf (particularly in View 1), the proposals have been designed to blend comfortably with the townscape character and within the setting of the Registered Primrose Hill through the use of appropriate height, scale, massing, elevational treatment and use of materials.
- 4.2. The proposed replacement building successfully echoes the Neo-Georgian classical style of architecture which characterises the townscape of the Avenue Road Sub-Area of the Elsworth Road Conservation Area; the high-quality design and use of materials, as well as the reinstatement of an appropriately designed building within the historic plot of No. 28, are considered to add renewed architectural interest to a high-quality townscape and to which the existing site contributes in only a neutral way.
- 4.3. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's National Design Guide (2019) [Appendix 2] and English Heritage and CABE's the Building in Context Toolkit (2001) [Appendix 3] have both been used to inform the proposals (the architectural quality of the proposed house, as well as its sensitivity to the distinctive townscape and character and appearance of the Elsworth Road Conservation Area). The NDG and Building in Context Toolkit have also been considered in this TVIA when evaluating the designs of the proposals, and their impact on the surrounding townscape, as well as the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of Primrose Hill.
- 4.4. It is considered that **the proposals overall will have a negligible and neutral to positive impact on the local townscape character, with the provision of some enhancement to the character and quality of the townscape by the reinstatement of an appropriately designed new building within the historic plot of No. 28.** The proposals have therefore taken full account of Step 4 of the Historic England criteria *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (ref. Appendix 1) in order to avoid harm to the settings of all identified heritage assets, principally in the provision of a well-considered and high-quality building which achieves a high standard of design that would provide enhancement to the baseline conditions on the site, as well as sustaining positive townscape elements such as the lodge house.

APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL GUIDANCE (*THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS*, DECEMBER 2017)

This note gives assistance concerning the assessment of the setting of heritage assets. Historic England recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to the complexity of the case, from straightforward to complex:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

The setting of a heritage asset is ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’. Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset. The starting point of the analysis is to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the development proposal.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.

This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting will provide the baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on significance. We recommend that this assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider:

- the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets
- the asset’s intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use
- the contribution made by noises, smells, etc to significance, and
- the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

The wide range of circumstances in which setting may be affected and the range of heritage assets that may be involved precludes a single approach for assessing effects. Different approaches will be required for different circumstances. In general, however, the assessment should address the attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:

- location and siting
- form and appearance
- wider effects
- permanence

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Enhancement may be achieved by actions including:

- removing or re-modelling an intrusive building or feature

- replacement of a detrimental feature by a new and more harmonious one
- restoring or revealing a lost historic feature or view
- introducing a wholly new feature that adds to the public appreciation of the asset
- introducing new views (including glimpses or better framed views) that add to the public experience of the asset, or
- improving public access to, or interpretation of, the asset including its setting

Options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the repositioning of a development or its elements, changes to its design, the creation of effective long-term visual or acoustic screening, or management measures secured by planning conditions or legal agreements. For some developments affecting setting, the design of a development may not be capable of sufficient adjustment to avoid or significantly reduce the harm, for example where impacts are caused by fundamental issues such as the proximity, location, scale, prominence or noisiness of a development. In other cases, good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement. Here the design quality may be an important consideration in determining the balance of harm and benefit.

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

It is good practice to document each stage of the decision-making process in a non-technical and proportionate way, accessible to non-specialists. This should set out clearly how the setting of each heritage asset affected contributes to its significance or to the appreciation of its significance, as well as what the anticipated effect of the development will be, including of any mitigation proposals.

Assessment Step 2 Checklist

The starting point for this stage of the assessment is to consider the significance of the heritage asset itself and then establish the contribution made by its setting. The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. It may be the case that only a limited selection of the attributes listed is likely to be particularly important in terms of any single asset.

The asset's physical surroundings

- Topography
- Aspect
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design eg hierarchy, layout
- Orientation and aspect
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
- Functional relationships and communications
- History and degree of change over time

Experience of the asset

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Noise, vibration and other nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Scents and smells
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Land use
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- Rarity of comparable survivals of setting
- Cultural associations
- Celebrated artistic representations
- Traditions

Assessment Step 3 Checklist

The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. It may be that only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development.

Location and siting of development

- Proximity to asset
- Position in relation to relevant topography and watercourses
- Position in relation to key views to, from and across
- Orientation
- Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset

Form and appearance of development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Competition with or distraction from the asset
- Dimensions, scale and massing
- Proportions
- Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through), reflectivity
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc)
- Architectural and landscape style and/or design
- Introduction of movement or activity
- Diurnal or seasonal change

Wider effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline, silhouette
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc
- Lighting effects and 'light spill'
- Change to general character (eg urbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to public access, use or amenity
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover
- Changes to communications/accessibility/permeability, including traffic, road junctions and car-parking, etc
- Changes to ownership arrangements (fragmentation/permitted development/etc)
- Economic viability

Permanence of the development

- Anticipated lifetime/temporariness
- Recurrence
- Reversibility

APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE CHARACTERISTICS (EXCERPTS)

1. Context is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.

C1 Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context

Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It enhances positive qualities and improves negative ones. Some features are physical, including:

- the existing built development, including layout, form, scale, appearance, details, and materials;
- local heritage – see below – and local character;
- landform, topography, geography and ground conditions;
- landscape character, drainage and flood risk, biodiversity and ecology;
- access, movement and accessibility;
- environment – including landscape and visual impact, microclimate, flood risk, noise, air and water quality;
- views inwards and outwards;
- the pattern of uses and activities, including community facilities and local services; and
- how it functions.

Well-designed new development is integrated into its wider surroundings, physically, socially and visually. It is carefully sited and designed, and is demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing situation, including:

- the landscape character and how places or developments sit within the landscape, to influence the siting of new development and how natural features are retained or incorporated into it;
- patterns of built form, including local precedents for routes and spaces and the built form around them, to inform the layout, form and scale;
- the architecture prevalent in the area, including the local vernacular and other precedents that contribute to local character, to inform the form, scale, appearance, details and materials of new development.

C2 Value heritage, local history and culture

When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.

Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by:

- the history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences;
- the significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing;
- the local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details

2. The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses.

I1 Respond to existing local character and identity

Well-designed new development is influenced by:

- an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents;
- the characteristics of the existing built form;
- the elements of a place or local places that make it distinctive; and
- other features of the context that are particular to the area – see Context .

This includes considering:

- the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements;
- the height, scale, massing and relationships between buildings;
- views, vistas and landmarks;
- the scale and proportions of buildings;
- façade design, such as the degree of symmetry, variety, the pattern and proportions of windows and doors, and their details;
- the scale and proportions of streets and spaces;
- hard landscape and street furniture;
- soft landscape, landscape setting and backdrop;
- nature and wildlife, including water;
- light, shade, sunshine and shadows; and
- colours, textures, shapes and patterns.

I2 Well-designed, high quality and attractive

Well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include:

- adopting typical building forms, features, materials and details of an area;
- drawing upon the architectural precedents that are prevalent in the local area, including the proportions of buildings and their openings;
- using local building, landscape or topographical features, materials or planting types;
- introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places;
- creating a positive and coherent identity that residents and local communities can identify with.

I3 Create character and identity

Design decisions at all levels and scales shape the character of a new place or building. Character starts to be determined by the siting of development in the wider landscape, then by the layout – the pattern of streets, landscape and spaces, the movement network and the arrangement of development blocks. It continues to be created by the form, scale, design, materials and details of buildings and landscape. In this way, it creates a coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including all residents and local communities.

APPENDIX 3: THE BUILDING IN CONTEXT TOOLKIT

The Building in Context Toolkit grew out of the publication **Building in Context™** published by English Heritage and CABE in 2001. The purpose of that publication was to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts. The founding and enduring principle is that all successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and character appraisal to fully understand context.

The eight Building in Context principles are:

Principle 1

A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.

Principle 2

A successful project will relate to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land.

Principle 3

A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.

Principle 4

A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it.

Principle 5

A successful project will respect important views.

Principle 6

A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings.

Principle 7

A successful project will use materials and building methods which are as high quality as those used in existing buildings.

Principle 8

A successful project will create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.