



HE1 Lewisham's historic environment

- A The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the value and significance of Lewisham's historic environment and its setting by:
 - a. Collaborating with stakeholders to identify, assess, monitor and review heritage assets and understand their importance to both the Borough and the nation;
 - b. Celebrating Lewisham's historic environment and ensuring that it is central to reinforcing sense of place and place making;
 - c. Ensuring the significance of the Borough's heritage assets is fully understood, positively valued and that their contribution to sustainable neighbourhoods and communities is recognised, including by preparing a Heritage Strategy;
 - d. Requiring that heritage meaningfully informs the design of development proposals, and only supporting development that preserves or enhances the significance of heritage assets and their setting;
 - e. Promoting heritage-led regeneration and urban renewal as a means to retain, reveal or reinstate significant aspects of the Borough's historic environment;
 - f. Requiring development proposals to demonstrate that all reasonable measures have been investigated to avoid harm to heritage assets; and
 - g. Using planning powers available to appropriately manage new development in sensitive places and to remedy harmful unauthorised works.
- B All development proposals in the historic environment should assess whether the site, building or structure is – or could be – identified as a heritage asset. The Council will consider the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposals on its special interest. Any harm should be clearly and convincingly justified, and will be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal.
- C Proposals for works that could impact on a heritage asset are required to be accompanied by a Heritage Statement. This should be compiled with reference to relevant and available sources of historic environment information, including Conservation Area Appraisals, and:
 - a. Explain the significance of the asset and its setting;
 - b. Set out how the asset has informed the design of the proposal; and
 - c. Assess the impact of the proposal on the asset.
- D Where a development proposal conflicts with the Development Plan but will secure the preservation of a heritage asset that is otherwise not financially viable to repair, the Council will assess whether the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Explanation

- 6.1 Lewisham has an extremely rich and varied historic environment. It encompasses landscapes, water bodies, parks and open spaces, buildings, urban spaces and the features within them, along with archaeological remains both buried and above ground. The historic environment encapsulates the social and cultural history of Lewisham, its communities and people. This is reflected in the physical fabric of places, the values that people ascribe to them and the traditions and memories associated with them. Their value may be historic, architectural or artistic, social and communal.
- 6.2 We are committed to ensuring that the full extent of the significance of heritage assets is understood, both by development industry stakeholders and the wider public, and to properly recognise and protect this significance. This is vital to the successful delivery of the spatial strategy for the Borough. As Lewisham's places evolve over time it is imperative that our irreplaceable heritage assets are appropriately preserved and the distinctive characteristics that make them special are retained and revealed.
- 6.3 The Council will continue to seek to identify new heritage assets to broaden public understanding and appreciation of the historic environment. Heritage assets may be identified through Borough-wide reviews, through nomination by members of the community or by the Council when assessing planning applications. The Council's approach to all newly identified assets is:
 1. To identify the nature and extent of the asset;
 2. To assess its architectural, historic and archaeological significance against adopted criteria; and
 3. If it meets the adopted criteria, undertake public consultation on the proposal to designate as a Conservation Area, identify as an Area of Special Local Character, or add it to the Local List, as appropriate.
- 6.4 In planning policy terms the Borough's heritage assets comprise of statutorily designated assets and non-designated assets, both of which make important contributions to the communities within which they are situated. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that these assets are preserved or enhanced over the long-term. As well as recognising the value of these assets in their own right, their conservation will support the vitality and local distinctiveness of places across the Borough, and to help instil and reinforce a sense of place amongst residents and visitors.
- 6.5 Conservation is an active and continual process of maintenance and managing change based on a thorough understanding of what is special about a place. It requires a multi-agency approach to deliver beneficial outcomes. Our expectation is that key stakeholders including community and special interest groups and the development industry will all positively engage in the conservation process. Collaboration is necessary to deliver our growth and regeneration objectives whilst also ensuring Lewisham's historic environment can continue to be celebrated and enjoyed, both by current and future generations.
- 6.6 All development proposals should be based on a full understanding of the significance of heritage assets within the site and surrounding area. This should be established by reference to relevant and available sources of historic environment information. This includes the Greater London

Historic Environment Record, the Council's planning and conservation webpages and Lewisham's Local History Archives. Applicants should consult good practice guidance to assist in assessing various levels of significance, such as that produced by Historic England. We will expect all development proposals to identify and respond positively to those elements that are of high, moderate and low historic significance and those elements that detract from the significance.

- 6.7 All development proposals that are likely to have an impact on a heritage asset or its setting must be accompanied by a Heritage Statement. The statement should clearly explain the significance of the asset and its setting, set out how this has guided the design of the proposal, and assess how the proposal impacts upon it. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how these findings have meaningfully informed the design of the proposal. The quality, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the heritage statement will be considered in the determination of planning applications.
- 6.8 Not all heritage assets are currently known, documented or fully understood. Buildings, structures or sites may be identified as non-designated heritage assets through the development process. For example, new information may be revealed by local groups through the consultation process or during preliminary site investigations undertaken by an applicant. In these circumstances we may seek amendments to proposals to ensure that the significance of an asset is appropriately preserved or enhanced.

- 6.9 Proposals affecting heritage assets should be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, having regard to and respecting local character and complying with other policies in this plan. Heritage should be considered as an integral component of sustainable neighbourhoods and communities and must meaningfully inform the design of development. Development proposals that appropriately preserve or help to better reveal and enhance heritage assets and their setting will be supported, subject to meeting other policy requirements.

- 6.10 Proposals that may cause harm to the significance of heritage assets should be clearly and convincingly justified through the information provided in the Heritage Statement. Where the loss or harm to a heritage asset is suitably justified and planning consent is granted, a programme of building recording of a level appropriate to the significance of the building and the extent of loss may be required. Such measures will help to mitigate impacts of development and will normally be sought by way of a planning condition.

- 6.11 Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or damage to a heritage asset, the current condition of the asset will not be taken into account in planning decisions.

- 6.12 We strongly advise applicants to seek the advice of specialist historic environment consultants at an early stage of the design process. This will help to ensure that the significance of heritage assets likely to be affected is appropriately identified. Applicants will then be better placed to consider options for bespoke and sensitive,

heritage-led design solutions that respond to this significance. Specialist consultants can also advise on and provide the necessary information to support an application.

which depart from the Development Plan and would normally be considered unacceptable may be permitted in order to secure the conservation of the asset.

6.13 To support conservation objectives through the development management process the Council may use powers available to it. This includes the use of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights, along with the use of Section 215 notices, Urgent Works or repair notices where this would help achieve conservation objectives. The use of such powers may be appropriate where there is a risk to historic fabric or the appearance of an area. There are Article 4 Directions in place for many of the Borough's Conservation Areas, and we will investigate the scope for introducing these elsewhere.

6.16 Enabling development should not harm the heritage asset it is intended to conserve. The Council will expect that measures have been fully explored and undertaken prior to considering enabling development. This may include maintenance, repair and decay-prevention measures, grant-funding for repairs and reuse, transfer of ownership to a building preservation trust or similar charity, and other sympathetic measures. Development proposals for enabling development must submit full financial viability details and will be assessed having regard to the criteria set out in Historic England's advice note GPA4 Enabling Development and Heritage Assets (2020).

6.14 Historic England maintains a Heritage at Risk register to assist in the monitoring and management of Listed Buildings and conservation areas that are at risk of losing their special interest. The Council has statutory authority to intervene when there is evidence of serious neglect, including Urgent Works Notices to secure works to vacant listed buildings or unlisted buildings in conservation areas and has powers of inspection.

6.15 The NPPF sets out policies for 'enabling development'. This is a term specifically used for cases where the cost of repair - and conversion to optimum viable use, if appropriate - of a heritage asset exceeds its market value on completion of repair or conversion, allowing for appropriate development costs (termed a 'conservation deficit'). In these cases development proposals



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