

Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage

Historic England Advice Note 7 (HEAN 7)

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



Summary

This Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) aims to provide comprehensive advice and information for all those involved in the identification of non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) and the development and upkeep of local heritage lists, including:

- Local Planning Authorities (LPAs);
- Neighbourhood plan-making bodies;
- Amenity or civic societies and community groups;
- Local communities;
- Planning and heritage consultants;
- People who own, use, care for or live in an asset on a local heritage list.

This document draws on good practice case studies from across the country as well as a 2025 survey of LPAs undertaken by Historic England. The HEAN is based on current policies and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) at the time of publication.

The HEAN forms part of a complementary series of research and guidance advice documents about local heritage lists:

Local Heritage Listing: Toolkit, Historic England, Swindon (2025)

Local Heritage Listing: Case Studies, Historic England, Swindon (2025)

Local Heritage Lists: The National Perspective, Research Report Series 38/2025, Historic England, Swindon (2025)

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Please refer to this document as Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, Historic England Advice Note 7 (3rd edition), Historic England, Swindon (2025)

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Jamia Masjid Al-Madina, Waterloo Road, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire. Included on Middlesborough's Local Heritage List. Alan Bull © Historic England Archive

1. The basics

What is a local heritage list?

Local heritage lists are lists of heritage assets which have been identified as being of value to a particular place and the community who live and work there. These assets can include buildings, monuments, sites, archaeology, open spaces, artworks, gardens, landscapes and more, depending on [the scope of the list](#). Local heritage lists are usually developed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), often with the input of civic societies or other local organisations, and the local community. The Historic Environment Record (HER) may also be involved, and the information available in the HER will likely be important in informing the local heritage list.

Heritage assets included on local heritage lists are classified in the planning system as ‘[non-designated heritage assets](#)’ (NDHAs). All NDHAs (not just those included in local heritage lists), are afforded a degree of protection through the planning system: under the current framework, for planning applications that impact on an NDHA or its setting, LPA decision makers are required to make a balanced judgement considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.¹ Whilst NDHAs have a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, they do not carry the same weight as designated heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings or scheduled monuments which are hosted on the [National Heritage List for England](#), or NHLE).

This Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) aims to provide a comprehensive guide to local heritage lists, outlining the benefits as well as the different steps involved in the process. It is illustrated with diverse examples of NDHAs from different local heritage lists across the country, reflecting the ability for local heritage lists to capture what makes a place special and unique. The HEAN can be used alongside the accompanying toolkit and case studies, which show how local heritage lists can be adapted depending on resource and the local context.

Developing (or refreshing) a local heritage list is a way of identifying, conserving and celebrating elements of the local historic environment that are valued by the local community, and which enrich and enliven the area. Crucially, local heritage lists should provide people based in the area with the opportunity to have their say on what is of value to them and their community.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework’, paragraph 216, page 61 (December 2024)

How did local listing develop, and how many local heritage lists are there today?

Lists of locally important buildings have been drawn up since the late 19th century by campaigning organisations and local authorities. Examples include the lists developed by SPAB (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings), the East End Preservation Trust and the London County Council to catalogue London's historic buildings, beginning in the 1890s. During the development of the first statutory lists in the 1940s, Inspectors sometimes identified non-statutory 'Grade III' buildings, which didn't meet the criteria for Grade II, but which contributed positively to the local historic environment. In the late 1960s many Grade III buildings were incorporated into Grade II, and those that weren't were reported to local authorities and in some cases taken up as a form of local heritage list.

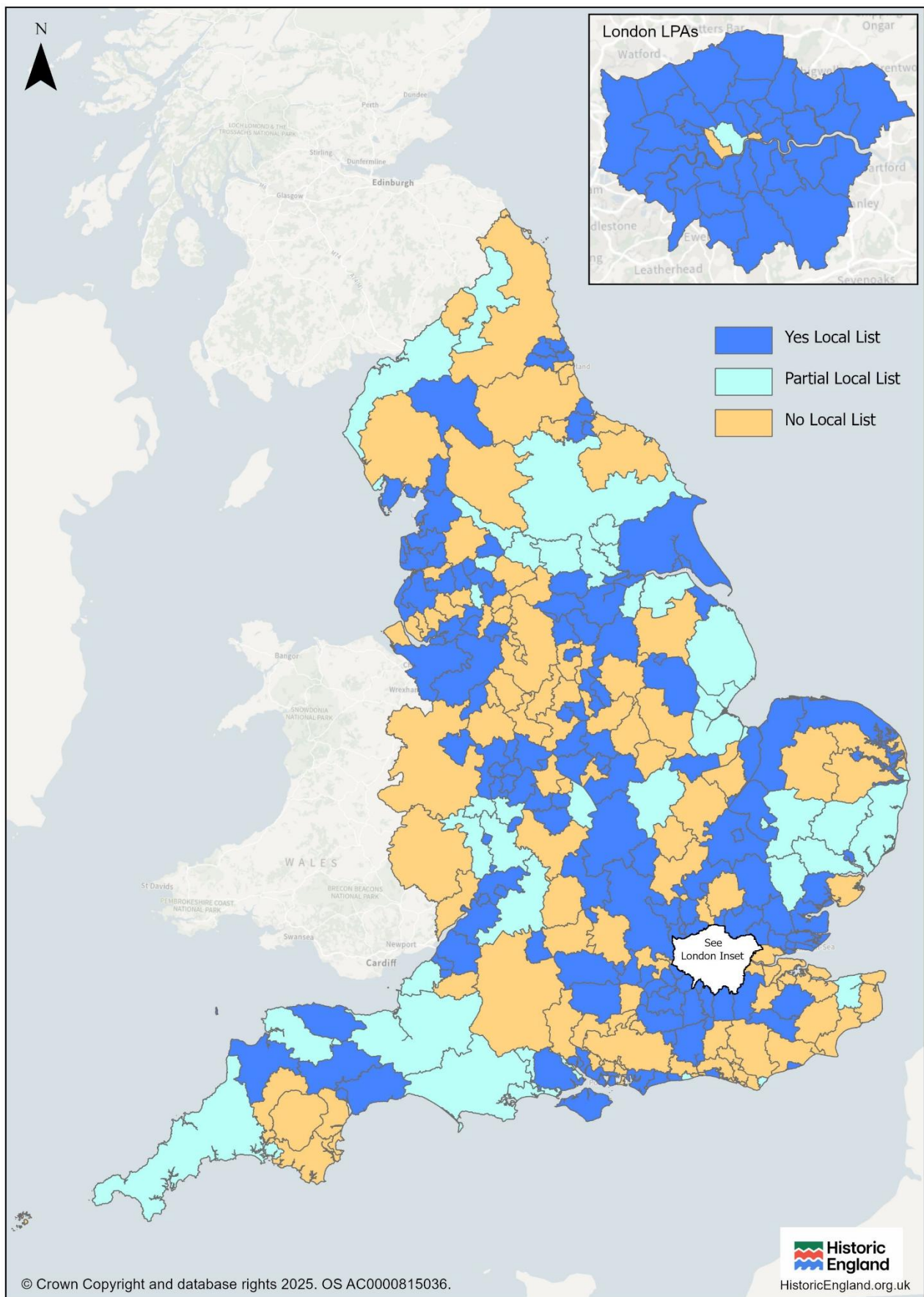
However, the uptake of such lists appears to have been sparse until at least the mid-1990s when they were first referred to in planning policy, in the form of the Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15, 1994). PPG15 confirmed for the first time that planning authorities had the option to develop local heritage lists, and that local plan policies could be put in place to protect locally listed buildings. Updates to planning policy in the 2000s and 2010s, as well as the publication of the first guidance on developing local heritage lists in 2012 (the precursor to this document) saw a further increase in the number of local heritage lists.

In 2020, a project funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also acted as a catalyst for the development of a number of new and revised lists, and today at least 70% of LPAs in England have one or more local heritage lists.² Research conducted in 2025 found that coverage varied between regions.³ In London, some 92% of LPAs have one or more local heritage lists, followed by 84% in the South West of the country. At 62% each, the North East and the East Midlands have the lowest coverage. See [map on page 4](#)

A more comprehensive history of local listing, and an evaluation of the 2020 MHCLG funded project, can be found in Historic England's research report: [Local Heritage Lists: The National Perspective](#) (2025).

² Noting that some LPAs may have a list covering only part of their authority area, or multiple lists covering different parts.

³ Government regions



Map showing local heritage list coverage in England as of July 2025

What are the benefits of a local heritage list?

Local heritage lists are a key component of a holistic approach to heritage protection, in which assets are given consideration within the planning system according to their significance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that heritage assets can vary in significance, from those with 'local historic value to those of the highest significance'.⁴ The NPPF also recognises that heritage assets should 'be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.'⁵

As well as promoting their conservation, local heritage lists are a way of identifying those heritage assets which are of value locally and giving the local community a voice in the process. Some of the benefits to different groups are explored below.

The local community benefits because:

- Their pride in place is increased;
- They are involved in identifying, conserving and celebrating their heritage;
- They are given a voice in articulating what is important to them;
- They have a tool through which they can help guide sustainable growth through the reuse of assets that they care about;
- The process may lead to fewer empty, derelict buildings in the vicinity, enhancing quality of place;
- They can take part in engagement and participation opportunities;
- They may be able to access heritage volunteering and training opportunities;
- There is evidence that heritage engagement can lead to [improved wellbeing](#).

The LPA benefits because:

- They can take a proactive approach to heritage protection;
- They can build positive relationships whilst leveraging the support and interest of the local community and local groups;
- They can increase public understanding of the role of planning and conservation;
- They have better evidence and tools to support placemaking through both plan and decision-making, which can help to reinforce the character of an area.

⁴ 'National Planning Policy Framework', paragraph 202, page 59 (December 2024)

⁵ IBID

The heritage sector benefits because:

- Local heritage lists allow for the recognition of a broad range of heritage values;
- Local heritage lists can complement the statutory designations;
- Heritage that people care about is safeguarded for the future;
- 'Newer' heritage can be celebrated and protected;
- Diverse heritage is celebrated, and new audiences are engaged;
- Specialist craft & heritage skills are supported in the restoration of locally significant buildings;
- Local heritage lists contribute a rich source of information about the local historic environment.

Amenity societies, civic societies and other local groups benefit from:

- An opportunity to share their specialist knowledge;
- An opportunity to build new relationships with the LPA and the wider community;
- An opportunity to articulate what is of value to them and their members.

Developers benefits because:

- Empty or disused buildings of value to the local community are recognised for positive and financially beneficial reuse;
- NDHAs are recognised at an earlier stage in the planning process, which helps to reduce uncertainty and reduce the risk of delays;
- NDHAs are identified in site allocations and area regeneration plans, leading to schemes which are locally responsive and more likely to gain the buy-in of local communities.

Homeowners/residents/people involved in caring for an NDHA benefit because:

- Their asset is recognised and celebrated as being of value locally,
- They have increased knowledge about the history and importance of their asset;
- They have greater clarity about the planning considerations for any future works to the asset;
- They better understand the need to care for and maintain the asset.

Finally, everyone benefits from the reuse of existing buildings in minimising carbon emissions.

Non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) in planning policy

Because the conservation of NDHAs is managed through the planning process it is important that the planning context is understood, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG):

The NPPF defines a heritage asset (to include both designated and non-designated) as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local heritage listing)⁶.

The PPG provides further detail on what constitutes a non-designated heritage asset, stating that:

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.⁷

There is no separate consenting regime for NDHAs, and the level of weight accorded to them in decisions is lower than that of designated assets. Nonetheless, they are an important part of the historic environment and can be a material consideration in planning decisions.

Planning policy on local heritage lists and NDHAs can be found in the NPPF and guidance on the application of this policy in the PPG. This is summarised below:

- The NPPF states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para 202);
- The planning system is plan-led and the NPPF states that those plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment (para 203);
- The PPG encourages LPAs to keep a local list of NDHAs. It states plan-making authorities should make clear and up to date information on NDHAs accessible to

⁶ 'National Planning Policy Framework', appendix 2, page 73 (December 2024)

⁷ 'Planning Practice Guidance - Historic environment', Paragraph: 039 (July 2019)

improve clarity and certainty. This includes information on the selection criteria used (Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723);

- In relation to neighbourhood plans, the PPG also states that it is beneficial for NDHAs to be clearly identified at the start of the plan-making process (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 18a-005-20190723);
- When determining applications, LPAs should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation (NPPF, Para 210);
- When determining applications, LPAs should take into account the effect of the application on the significance of an NDHA, requiring a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset. Planning applications can be refused on the grounds of harm to a non-designated heritage asset (NPPF, Para 216).

A clearly defined local heritage list would likely constitute a material consideration when assessing planning applications. Provided regard is had to all material considerations, it is for the decision maker to decide what weight is to be given to the material considerations in each case.

How can NDHAs be identified?

The PPG (paragraph 40) states that all decisions to identify NDHAs must be based on 'sound evidence'. There are several ways in which they can be identified, including:

- Through the development or revision of a local heritage list;
- Through the development of a Local Plan;
- Through the development of Neighbourhood Plan/s;
- Through conservation area appraisals and reviews;
- Through decision-making on planning applications.

Whatever the method of identifying NDHAs, the local community and groups which represent it (such as amenity or civic societies, neighbourhood forums, town or parish councils) should play a valuable role. As well as helping to identify NDHAs, they can also support the development of policies on NDHAs, and the development and revision of local heritage lists. The different methods of identifying NDHAs are explored in more detail below.

Through the Local Plan process

- Local planning authorities are required to make a Local Plan, setting out planning policies which will guide planning decisions in their area, including those covering heritage assets. As part of setting a positive strategy for the conservation or enhancement of the historic environment, it is advised that Local Plans contain a policy

on NDHAs. This has the benefit of creating more certainty for applicants (those applying for planning permission) and decision makers;

- A list prepared as part of the Local Plan process, and included in the Local Plan, would add weight to the local heritage list as a consideration but it would also introduce inflexibility: it will then only be possible to amend the local heritage list as part of a Local Plan review;
- However, an NDHA policy could make explicit reference to the local heritage list, in whatever form it has been produced. Signposting to an external document in this way would still provide a clear steer for decision makers and applicants as to what needs to be considered during the planning application process, while allowing for flexibility for entries to be added to or removed from the local heritage list;
- Local heritage lists can appear in many different formats; they do not necessarily need to be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be relevant in the decision-making process. For instance, they can appear as standalone lists, or within Conservation Area Appraisals. Regardless of how local heritage lists are expressed they would benefit from direct reference in any NDHA policy;
- It is however good practice for the Local Plan to contain appropriate policies to support protection of NDHAs, and to provide clarity as to how a local heritage list will be used to inform decision-making.

Through the development of Neighbourhood Plans

- Neighbourhood Plans can be developed by a parish or town council, a constituted neighbourhood forum or community group;
- Neighbourhood Plan Policies are required to be evidenced, subject to public and stakeholder consultation, independent examination and a referendum;
- The policies must also be formally adopted by the LPA, becoming part of the Development Plan;
- A local heritage list prepared as part of a Neighbourhood Plan for an area will be produced through the community because these plans are researched, written and voted on by the people who live in the neighbourhood.

Through the conservation area appraisal and review process

- Conservation areas are designated by LPAs to recognise an area of special architectural or historic interest;
- Conservation area appraisals may be a useful starting point for the identification of buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes as non-designated heritage assets. Some appraisals contain a list of NDHAs as an appendix;

- During the appraisal process unlisted buildings that make a 'positive contribution' to the character of a conservation area may be identified. More information about this can be found in 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (HEAN 1)';
- Demolition or part demolition in conservation areas usually requires planning permission, and there are additional considerations within many permitted development rights, providing an additional degree of protection.

Through decision-making on planning applications

- Non-designated heritage assets may also be identified by the LPA during the decision-making process on planning applications, as evidence emerges;
- Any such decisions to identify NDHAs need to be made in a way that is consistent with the identification of NDHAs for inclusion in a local heritage list, properly recorded, and made publicly available, for instance through an addition to a local heritage list, and through recording in the Historic Environment Record (HER);
- However, the inclusion of an asset in a HER does not itself identify it as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

If NDHAs can be identified in other ways, why have a local heritage list?

Local heritage lists provide clarity at an earlier stage in the development process and (depending on the way they were setup) can remain dynamic, allowing flexibility in our developing understanding of the historic environment. Many local heritage lists are open to new nominations as assets are identified: according to a 2025 survey, 71% of responding LPAs stated that their local heritage list remained open in this way.

A local heritage list is a way to identify an NDHA that allows community views to be taken into consideration more proactively, decisively and consistently. Whilst all methods of identifying NDHAs are legitimate, an NDHA identified through the local listing process benefits by being developed through collaboration with communities and local groups. This gives local heritage lists greater community buy-in, and the [benefits](#) are more widely understood and experienced.



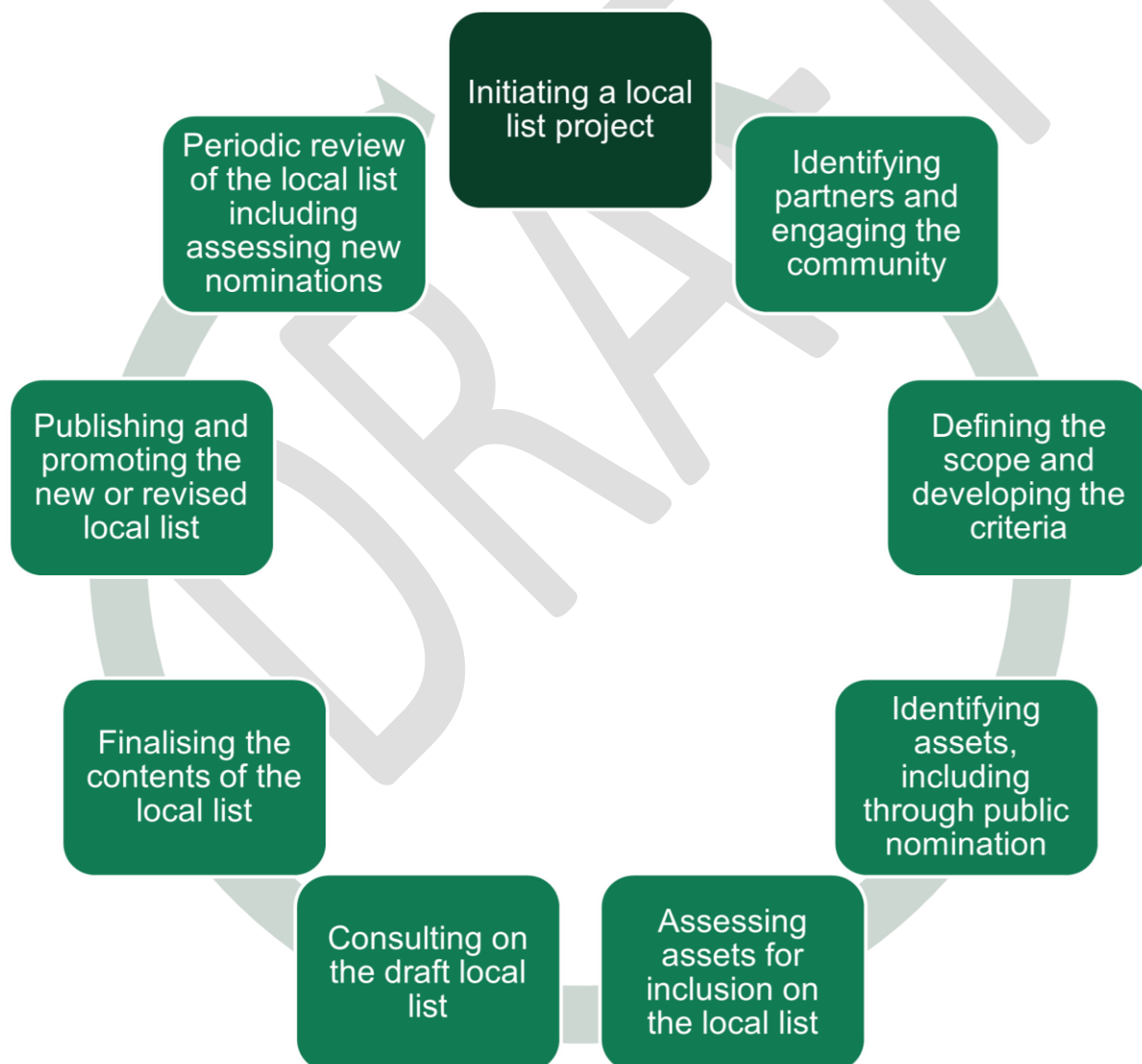
Boiler House designed by Sir Basil Spence, University of Sussex, Brighton, East Sussex. Included on Brighton and Hove's Local Heritage List. James O. Davies © Historic England Archive

2. Getting started on a new or revised local heritage list

The different stages of a local heritage list project

These stages will apply whether the project is to review an existing local heritage list or to develop a new one. The process should always be seen as cyclical – no local heritage list will ever be considered ‘complete’, and reviews and revisions of the list should also seek to engage the local community where possible.

Much as the demographics of a community aren’t static, neither is the built environment, nor our understanding of heritage and its associated values.



Key stages in the development of a local heritage list

Identifying stakeholders for a local heritage list project

Most local heritage lists have been developed by LPAs with input from local groups and the local community. According to a 2025 survey, 86% of responding LPAs said that the local heritage list had been developed with community input and 78% of LPAs said that the local heritage list had been revised with community input. In some areas, LPAs will have several local heritage lists covering different areas, presented in different formats and potentially with different criteria and open to different types of assets. This may stem from lists developed as part of neighbourhood plans, by local civic societies or where there have been changes to LPA boundaries.

In many cases the local heritage list process will have been initiated by the LPA, working closely with communities, local groups, amenity societies, neighbourhood forums and more. Where the LPA is unable to undertake this work, then alternative options for leading on the development or revision of the local heritage list could be considered, provided that the LPA is supportive and that approach is compliant with legislation and national policy objectives. Agreement on processes including assessing nominations, and the sign-off or adoption procedure, should be agreed in advance.

Pooling resources across neighbouring LPAs can also help where capacity is lacking, although some LPAs may have to take different approaches to aspects of the project (for instance in the sign-off of the final list), depending on their local plan policies.

The community, local leaders and local groups:

- The community has an essential role in supporting the overall process, especially the development of selection criteria and the nomination of assets. They should be engaged right from the start to ensure buy-in and understanding of the project;
- It would be useful to conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise at the start of the project to identify the many communities that make up the local area, and to identify local leaders and representative bodies through which to reach out to these communities;

The 'Local Heritage Listing: Toolkit' (Historic England, 2025) contains further ideas for potential groups to engage with.

Amenity, civic and local history groups:

- Local history, civic societies and other amenity groups will be able to bring their experience and knowledge of the local area and its heritage to any local heritage list project;
- It is worth bearing in mind that these groups, whilst knowledgeable, may not represent the whole community, and so it is important to engage other groups too.

Owners:

- The management of any NDHA on a local heritage list will also be easier if it is included on the list with the knowledge of the owner. Owners should be advised of the intention to locally list an asset, including an explanation of the planning implications;

- Whilst the process offers a good opportunity to develop a dialogue with owners and to provide them with information on the significance of their property, it is also important to put in place a process for handling requests not to add assets to the local heritage list.

Historic Environment Record (HER):

- The local HER will be an essential partner in any local heritage list project. Not only are they a key source of information about the historic environment, HER colleagues have specialist knowledge and skills and will be able to ensure the final list can be embedded within the existing HER.

Other potential participants:

- Town and parish councils can also play a vital part in helping to establish and eventually formalise the list;
- Universities and FE Colleges: As well as providing a useful source of research and support for the project, involving students on heritage courses could provide them with ‘real life’ experience of a heritage project.

Promoting the local heritage list project

When developing a new local heritage list, or updating an existing one, it’s a good idea to bring together interested parties before the process begins, to develop awareness and encourage community involvement. This will also ensure that the process remains transparent and has buy-in locally.

This could happen virtually through a webinar (recorded and uploaded for those not able to attend), or in-person events such as town hall meetings, an exhibition or drop-in sessions in accessible local venues.

To encourage participation from as many local groups as possible, this engagement could take place on their own terms, for instance in their usual venue and at their usual meeting time. Take the lead from local leaders about what type of engagement works best for their members or the communities they represent.

A well-considered promotion and outreach campaign, working across both planning, conservation and community teams at local authority level, and in partnership with leaders of diverse local community groups, organisations and heritage groups, is the best way of ensuring that local heritage lists are inclusive and representative of the communities that surround them.

A template press release and social media posts are available in ‘Local Heritage Listing: Toolkit’ (Historic England, 2025).



Buddhapadipa Thai Temple, Calonne Rd, London. Included on the London Borough of Merton's Local Heritage List. © Historic England Archive

3. Defining the scope and criteria of the local list

Defining the scope of the local heritage list

One of the benefits of local heritage listing is the flexibility to recognise a wide range of heritage types and associated heritage values. This can often include types of heritage which would not be suitable for statutory designation, but which together form part of the unique character of a place.

Local heritage lists can include all types of heritage assets, including (but not limited to):

- Buildings (such as a railway station or a chapel);
- Structures (such as docks or canals);
- Places and spaces (such as a town square or terrace);
- Designed landscapes (such as cemeteries or town parks);
- Natural landscapes (such as a village green or tor);
- Monuments (such as war memorials or a tomb);
- Public artworks (such as mosaics or sculptures);
- Archaeology (such as the ruins of a city wall);
- Street furniture (such as post boxes or telephone kiosks);
- Wayfinding (such as milestones or fingerposts);
- Other elements of the historic environment such as cobbles, setts, parish or ward boundary markers, ghost signs, gable end murals and more.

The types of heritage to include can be determined locally, and will directly influence the criteria (for instance, if archaeology is included there will need to be a criteria for identifying and assessing any archaeological assets put forward for nomination).

Before creating a new local heritage list, or reviewing an existing one, it will also be useful to decide on an approach to its development and presentation, especially if the local heritage list is likely to cover large areas. Some possible approaches include:

- Thematic: looking at the area in terms of distinct themes (for example industrial structures, military structures, high street buildings or public artworks);
- Asset type: similar to the thematic approach, but structuring the local heritage list based on asset type (for example buildings, artworks, street furniture or parks and gardens);
- Geographic: breaking down the area into smaller component areas, for instance by parish, ward or neighbourhood. This may be especially useful for LPAs covering large areas or which are rich in heritage assets.

Developing criteria for the local heritage list

Local heritage lists will be more valuable if supported by objective, publicly available criteria, developed with the input of the local community. It is important that the criteria respond to the local heritage of the area. This may include recognition that local distinctiveness could lie as much in the commonplace or everyday as it does in the rare.

The criteria and process used to assess assets should be made publicly available; this could be included with the published list so that it is clear how the significance of the assets on the local heritage list have been assessed. Many local heritage lists now contain an explanation of how the individual assets on the list meet the criteria, which is beneficial for providing clarity on where the significance lies, which can support the future management of the assets.

The indicative criteria below are provided as a suggestion of the kind of themes which could be considered and are not exhaustive.

- Age: The relative age of a particular asset may depend on the different periods of development which have shaped it;
- Rarity: This should be judged against local characteristics. For instance, in some areas a particular asset type might be common and so the local heritage list may include exemplars, or good representative examples rather than seeking to include every example of that asset type. The same asset type may be rare in another area;
- Design, Architectural or Artistic Interest: The intrinsic design and aesthetic value of an asset relating to local and/or national styles, materials, construction and craft techniques, or any other distinctive characteristics (for instance planting, in the case of designed landscapes);
- Landmark status: Some buildings may be singled out for their value as landmarks within the local town or streetscape;
- Historical association: A significant historical association, including links to important local figures, groups, cultural practices or events may enhance the significance of a heritage asset;
- Evidential value: Assets may provide evidence about past human activity in the area, perhaps in the form of buried remains or revealed in the structure of buildings or in a designed landscape. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are primary sources of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them;
- Social or communal value: Assets may be a valuable source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence, contributing to the 'collective memory' of a place. As noted in the PPG (paragraph 6): 'Heritage assets ... can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity';
- Collective value: Assets with a clear visual design or historic relationship, such as a school or monastic buildings complex, or a series of shop frontages might have a collective value

as an assemblage. Collective value could include collections of similar heritage assets that are geographically dispersed but which function in relationship to each other, such as milestones, signposts or pillboxes.

Understanding the local historic environment

The preparation of an overarching statement setting out the significance of the local historic environment can be a useful tool for developing local selection criteria. This might take the form of a statement which sets out what is distinct or characteristic about an area. The preparation of such a statement is also a good opportunity to encourage wider community involvement. The statement could cover themes such as:

- Key periods of development;
- Characteristic styles;
- Social history;
- Intangible traditions and practices;
- Patterns of settlement;
- Infrastructure;
- Landscapes;
- Street plans;
- Street furniture;
- Key local figures, groups, or events.

Historic England provides guidance on assessing the heritage interest of an area in [Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments](#).

There is also a similar process set out in [Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management](#) (Second Edition).



Tyne Tunnel Ventilation Tower (South Side), Ferry St/Chaytor St, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear. Included on South Tyneside's Local Heritage List. Alan Bull © Historic England Archive

4. Identifying and assessing nominations

Identifying potential candidates for the local heritage list

A range of methods can, and should, be used to identify candidates for the local heritage list. If revising an existing list, it is important to review the assets already on the list, to test them against the current criteria.

Some potential sources of information on candidates for the local heritage list are included below, but this is not exhaustive:

- Public nomination: The value and benefit to local communities of meaningful heritage participation is well-recognised, increasing heritage knowledge and skills and improving community wellbeing for example. Well-designed social media campaigns, and the use of digital mapping and polling platforms can significantly raise the profile and increase the reach of such campaigns beyond the usual communities and groups that participate in heritage.
- County Gardens Trusts can be a useful source of information on designed landscapes, for instance through their research and recording activity;
- Local history or archaeology groups, amenity and civic societies: Many groups and organisations also have an interest in, and maintain records on, potentially suitable assets and may be able to add to local knowledge if included in the process;
- Existing research publications, blogs, podcasts and oral histories;
- Existing databases and crowdsourced mapping tools;
- Listing advice reports: Records of assets considered, but rejected, for national designation can be good candidates for local heritage lists, provided they meet the local selection criteria. An assessment carried out for national designation, even if unsuccessful, will help in understanding the heritage asset;
- Local archives, local records offices and local studies libraries;
- Local Historic Environment Records (HERs);
- Designed landscapes that have been identified in the Historic England Register Review are included in lists held by Historic England and by HERs.

The kind of material available in HERs is listed in [Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment](#) (GPA 2), and through individual [HER audits](#).

Capturing public nominations

Public nomination should form a key element of the process, and this will be helped if supported by a simple and easy to use nomination form. It is also helpful to provide advice to people submitting nominations on the type and amount of information required to support the nomination, for instance in the form of an accompanying 'how to guide' or a recorded webinar.

The nomination form, or accompanying guidance document, should also set out any restrictions on eligibility, for instance signposting members of the public to the NHLE so that they can ensure the asset is not already included on the statutory list. If assets in conservation areas are to be excluded this should also be made clear. The types of heritage that can be nominated (for instance buildings, designed landscapes, archaeology etc) should also be covered on the form, or in the accompanying guidance.

As the nominator may not have access to detailed information about the historic environment, or have the same familiarity with architectural terms, the experience of local experts, students, voluntary organisations or local authority staff will be a valuable addition in conducting additional research to support the nomination and in explaining how it meets the criteria. The more information that can be provided about the significance of the asset and the reasons for its inclusion, the more effective its identification as a locally listed heritage asset will be.

Consider the language used in the form to ensure it is accessible to experts and non-experts alike and offer alternative formats for accessibility if possible. Consider offering drop-in sessions for anyone requiring extra support with the process.

A template form is available in the accompanying 'Local Heritage Listing: Toolkit' (Historic England, 2025).

Assessing candidates for the local heritage list

To qualify for local heritage listing, nominated assets will need to be eligible⁸ and meet the requirements of the selection criteria and national planning policy. Assessment processes, including public consultation, are helpful in identifying errors or inaccuracies in supporting information. Providing clarity on the assessment process for applicants is important to ensure transparency, including any scoring criteria to be used. This could be provided in an accompanying guidance document or on the local heritage list project webpages.

Selection panels can be an effective way in which to assess nominated assets independently. Membership could helpfully be drawn from a representative cross-section of the community and not restricted to professionals. The panel's primary responsibility will be the production of a shortlist that can be presented for public consultation.

⁸ It is important to identify any assets that should not be added to the local heritage list at this stage, including buildings or sites already included as designated heritage assets in the NHLE, as these are already subject to other forms of protection and duplication would be both unnecessary and unhelpful.



South Norwood Library, Lawrence Road, Croydon. Included on Croydon's Local Heritage List. Chris Redgrave © Historic England Archive

5. Finalising, sharing and keeping the list up to date

Consulting on the proposed local heritage list

Once there is a shortlist of nominations that have been assessed for inclusion, public comment can be sought in the form of a consultation. Comments received in response to the publication of the shortlist may be of additional use in confirming the suitability of adding an asset to the local heritage list.

Particular attention should be given to responses received from the owners of assets as these will assist in developing future management strategies. Although there is no statutory requirement to consult owners before adding an asset to the local heritage list, inviting comment may provide information that is important for understanding its significance.

The responsibility for assessing any requests not to list could fall to the selection panel or local authority staff, but it is important that a procedure is put in place for handling requests from owners not to add the asset to the list, and this procedure is adequately publicised.

Getting the local heritage list signed off

Lists led by the LPA

Once the assets on the shortlist for nomination have passed all the necessary checks and the consultation process has been completed, the final step is for sign off at the appropriate level. This might be via a committee or Cabinet Members, or the final sign-off might be the responsibility of Senior Leadership in the planning team.

Lists led by community groups

Where a community group is creating the list, this will need to be signed off by the group itself prior to being adopted by the local authority concerned. The approval and adoption process should be discussed and agreed with all parties from the start of the project, to ensure the process is transparent and understood by all involved. Formal adoption ensures public confidence and maximises the influence of the local heritage list as a material consideration, ensuring it is given proper weight in planning decisions.

Lists led by Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forums

Where a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum is preparing a local heritage list for a Neighbourhood Plan, the LPA will be an important stakeholder at the examination stage. The LPA will be the body responsible for deciding whether to accept the examiner's recommendations, whether to take the plan to referendum and, ultimately, whether it should be made. As such, it is sensible to work closely with the LPA's heritage or conservation team from

an early stage, who will ultimately be responsible for informing the council's decisions affecting the locally listed assets.

Publishing the local heritage list

It is crucial that the LPA publishes the local heritage list to ensure that it enables appropriate consideration of non-designated heritage assets through the planning system but also to provide the public with evidence of a transparent approach. Ideally the published local heritage list should include:

- Information on how the list was developed or revised, when this took place, what approach was taken and what the criteria are (this could be in an appendix or supplementary document);
- An explanation as to how the list will inform the LPAs decision-making on heritage assets (this could be in an appendix or supplementary document);
- What the list means for homeowners (this could be in an appendix or supplementary document);
- Photographs and/or a description to help with identification;
- Location information to help with identification (for smaller items such as street furniture, using co-ordinates or What3Words will be helpful);
- Mapping, or a link to a separate map;
- A brief description;
- A brief explanation of which criteria each asset meets, and if possible, how the asset meets those criteria.

A template list entry is available in the accompanying 'Local Heritage Listing: Toolkit' (Historic England, 2025).

Depending on the approach taken, the document could be divided by type, theme or geographic area. Many local heritage lists are organised by geographic areas such as wards or parishes, with a map at the start of each section showing the distribution of locally listed heritage assets across each area. Accessibility and value to users is likely to be maximised by an innovative and imaginative approach to presentation, with links to maps or additional information where possible.

Linking the local heritage list to the LPA's geographic information system (GIS) will also guarantee that planning applications affecting locally listed assets can take full account of the significance the community attaches to those assets. This will further ensure local heritage lists are able to inform local planning authority decision-making.

As well as publishing it, the finalisation of the local heritage list could also be an opportunity to celebrate the success of the project. There could be a launch event, a pop-up exhibition or a social media campaign to celebrate and share some of the assets added to the local heritage list. Sharing the finished document with all those involved in its creation is also a positive opportunity to thank them for their input.

Embedding the local heritage list in the HER

As well as being published on the local planning authority website, the local heritage list should also be added to the HER. The NPPF emphasises the importance of HERs in providing a core of information for plan-making and decision-taking. HERs are unique repositories of information relating to landscapes, buildings, sites and artefacts. Their content underpins the identification, recording, protection and conservation of the local historic environment and the interpretation of historic environment designation and planning decisions. HER recording guidelines vary across the country. Individual HERs are best placed to advise on how to collect and collate supporting data.

The inclusion of a site or structure in an HER does not itself identify it as a non-designated heritage asset: inclusion merely records valuable information about it and does not reflect the planning judgement needed to determine whether it does in fact have a degree of heritage significance which merits consideration in planning decisions. However, the information within the HER will help to identify candidates for possible inclusion in a local heritage list.

In addition to supporting all aspects of local heritage list preparation, HERs are also repositories for the lists themselves. To ensure that HERs are kept up-to-date, and that local heritage lists are accessible, clear procedures are needed to support the swift addition of local heritage lists to the relevant HERs, as well as for any amendments which are subsequently made to the lists.

Assets identified in local heritage lists should be added to the HERs and arrangements will need to be in place for updating the list, and therefore the HER, when heritage assets which are not on the list are identified, for example through the decision-making process for planning applications.

Keeping the local heritage list up to date

Local heritage lists benefit from periodic review and revision. A review may include adding new buildings or sites or removing those that no longer fulfil the selection criteria. The review period is best decided at the local level but could be timed to coincide with other milestones such as the review of the local or neighbourhood plan. As with the development of the local heritage list, the review process should also seek to involve the local community, ensuring transparency about the reasons for the review, the process for review and how the public and local groups can feed in.

Reviews of the list can also be made on an on-going basis (as and when nominations are received) or may be held once a set number of nominations have been submitted. Removal of assets from the list may be appropriate in circumstances where an asset no longer meets the criteria.

Local heritage lists are also likely to need updating between reviews, for example in response to the identification of non-designated heritage assets through the decision-making process for planning applications. A change in the local heritage list criteria may also provoke a review. But even where there is no external prompt, it is still useful to revisit the list to check that heritage

assets included still merit inclusion on the list and to check that heritage assets identified in the planning process have been added to the list, thereby maintaining a local heritage list's value and relevance.

No local heritage list can ever be considered definitive, and further additions may be required, particularly those arising during the course of planning decisions. Therefore, local planning authorities should ensure that officers have the ability to assess heritage assets for inclusion within the local heritage list and either the delegated authority to add them to the list, or to seek a rapid decision through a clearly defined procedure such as a selection panel.



Michael Faraday Community School by Alsop Sparch Architects, Portland Street, Walworth, London. Included on the London Borough of Southwark's Local Heritage List. Chris Redgrave © Historic England Archive

6. Appendices

Local Heritage List Checklist

Getting started

- Have you articulated why this is important for your area, and sought buy-in from all relevant parties and partners?
- Have you decided on an approach to developing the list, i.e. will it be linked to the local plan?
- Have you identified local partners, and do you have a plan for engaging with them?
- Do you have a plan to promote the local heritage list project, to engage the wider public with the process?
- Have you reviewed assets on the existing list, if there is one?

Defining the scope and criteria

- Have you defined what asset types will be included, i.e. buildings, designed landscapes, archaeology etc?
- Do you have a draft list of criteria, bearing in mind the local context?
- Do you have a mechanism to ask the wider public about the proposed criteria, or invite them to submit ideas for further criteria?

Identifying and assessing nominations

- Do you have an accessible mechanism to invite nominations?
- Do you have a plan to promote the nomination process?
- Have you asked local civic societies and other groups for their input?
- Have you looked at other sources of information for potential candidates, such as the HER?
- Do you have a plan for reviewing or assessing nominations, for instance a selection panel?
- Do you have photographs of all the nominations?
- Have you mapped the boundaries of all the nominations?
- Do you have a plan for consulting with the public on the draft list?

Finalising, sharing and keeping the list up to date

- Have all owners/occupiers been consulted?
- Have you checked that the assets nominated for the local heritage list aren't already included on the NHLE, including as curtilage?
- Do you have a plan for any owners/occupiers unhappy with their asset being included?
- Do you have a plan for sharing the final list in an accessible format?

- Has the final list been submitted to the HER?
- Do you have a plan for ensuring the list remains dynamic and up to date, for instance regular check-in points?

Glossary and definitions

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

DCMS is a ministerial department which supports heritage, culture, arts, media, sport, tourism and civil society.

Historic Environment Record (HER)

HERs are information services that provide access to detailed and dynamic resources about the archaeology and historic built environment of a defined geographic area. They have been created as a result of decades of research and investigation. They are maintained and updated for public benefit and used in accordance with national and international standards.

Local Authority (LA)

Depending on your area, local government consists of at least one or two tiers of authorities. Two tiers include county councils and district, borough or city councils. Single tier local authorities include unitary councils, London boroughs and metropolitan boroughs. There is an additional type of regional authority, Combined Authorities, where two or more councils collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.

Local Heritage List

Local heritage lists are lists of assets which have been identified as being of value to a particular place and the community who live and work there, and merit consideration in the planning system. May also be known by other names such as a 'Register of Buildings of Townscape Merit', 'List of buildings of townscape, landmark or local historic merit', 'List of non-designated heritage assets' etc. For consistency, the term Local Heritage List is used throughout this document.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)

The planning system is designed to be applied by local government and communities. Local government administers much of the planning system, preparing Local Plans, determining planning applications and carrying out enforcement against unauthorised development.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)

A ministerial department, MHCLG lead on national housing and planning policy, local government and English devolution, regional and local growth and more.

Non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs)

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage

assets. Not all NDHAs are on local heritage lists, as they can be identified through other means.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a balanced set of national planning policies for England covering the economic, social and environmental aspects of development. The policies in it must be taken into account in preparing Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and it is a 'material consideration' in deciding planning applications.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

PPG provides further context on various aspects of planning policy, including heritage, and accompanies the NPPF.

Supplementary planning guidance (SPG)

Supplementary Planning Guidance is provided where the level of guidance required is too detailed for inclusion in the local plan, or if a rapid policy response is needed to an emerging issue.

Supplementary planning documents (SPD)

Supplementary Planning Documents build upon and provide more detailed guidance about policies in the Local Plan.

Local plans

Local Plans are the key documents through which local planning authorities can set out a vision and framework for the future development of the area, engaging with their communities in doing so.

Neighbourhood plans

Neighbourhood plans give communities power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

Parish and town councils, neighbourhood forums

Where they exist, parish and town councils play an important role in commenting on planning applications that affect their area. Where parish or town councils do not exist, representatives of the local community may apply to establish a neighbourhood forum to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

Adapted from: [Plain English guide to the planning system](#) and [Designing Buildings Wiki](#)



Sheath Lane Railway Footbridge, Oxshott, Surrey. Included on Elmbridge's Local Heritage List. Chris Redgrave © Historic England Archive

7. Illustrations

Jamia Masjid Al-Madina, Waterloo Road, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire. Included on Middlesbrough's Local Heritage List. Alan Bull © Historic England Archive 1

Map showing local heritage list coverage in England as of July 2025 4

Boiler House designed by Sir Basil Spence, University of Sussex, Brighton, East Sussex. Included on Brighton and Hove's Local Heritage List. James O. Davies © Historic England Archive 11

Key stages in the development of a local heritage list 12

Buddhapadipa Thai Temple, Calonne Rd, London. Included on the London Borough of Merton's Local Heritage List. © Historic England Archive 15

Tyne Tunnel Ventilation Tower (South Side), Ferry St/Chaytor St, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear. Included on South Tyneside's Local Heritage List. Alan Bull © Historic England Archive 19

South Norwood Library, Lawrence Road, Croydon. Included on Croydon's Local Heritage List. Chris Redgrave © Historic England Archive 22

Michael Faraday Community School by Alsop Sparch Architects, Portland Street, Walworth, London. Included on the London Borough of Southwark's Local Heritage List. Chris Redgrave © Historic England Archive 26

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