

## 5.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### National Context

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out objectives for achieving sustainable development, protecting and enhancing the natural and historic built environment and sets the policy for the treatment of archaeological remains on land.
- 5.2 National Policy refers to heritage assets which are defined ‘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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’
- 5.3 Designated heritage assets are those which are designated under national legislation such as statutorily Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Other heritage assets are those which are not nationally listed but may be considered to be of importance locally.
- 5.4 The historic environment is at the heart of sense of place and local distinctiveness and as heritage assets are a non renewable resource there is presumption in favour of their conservation: The more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption for its conservation.
- 5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the importance of the historic environment with the main Government objectives being to:
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance
  - Contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by capturing evidence from the historic environment and making this publicly available particularly where the heritage asset is to be lost<sup>3</sup>.

### Local Context

- 5.7 The protection and enhancement of the historic environment is seen as a priority for the Council and has been identified as one of the key strategic objectives within the Council’s Core Strategy due to the District’s rich and diverse heritage. Within Three Rivers, the following are identified as heritage assets that make a positive contribution to the historic environment:
- Statutorily Listed Buildings
  - Locally Important Buildings
  - Conservation Areas
  - Ancient Monuments
  - Historic Parks and Gardens (registered and unregistered)
  - Sites of Archeological Interest
- 5.8 In addition, the Council will seek to identify heritage assets at the earliest opportunity within the decision making process. The protection of that heritage asset will then be given weight appropriate to the significance of the asset.
- 5.9 All of these heritage assets contribute to the unique character and quality of Three Rivers’ historic built environment and provide an invaluable record of the District. Therefore, it is essential that these special buildings and sites are preserved, protected and, where appropriate, enhanced using all tools available in line with national and regional planning policy.

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<sup>3</sup> National Planning Policy Framework

## **Policy Approach**

### **Listed Buildings**

- 5.10 The Government's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interests contains over 352 entries relating to buildings within Three Rivers which form an integral part of the District's historic landscape. These buildings/structures are nationally listed and include historic homes such as Moor Park Mansion and Hunton Park, public houses, ecclesiastical buildings, and structures such as telephone kiosks, statues and bridges including the railway bridge in Railway Terrace, Kings Langley designed by Robert Stephenson for the London and Birmingham Railway Company.
- 5.11 Listed Building Consent is required for demolition or for any alteration or extension to a Listed Building which could affect its character (interiors as well as exteriors) and for works to any fixtures and to buildings or structures within the curtilage of the building. Control over changes to Listed Buildings is not intended to prevent all alterations but to protect the buildings from unnecessary demolition and from unsuitable alterations which would be detrimental to the historical significance of the building.
- 5.12 The demolition of a Listed Building will only be permitted in wholly exceptional circumstances.

### **Locally Important Buildings**

- 5.13 There are a large number of other buildings that whilst not of sufficient quality or importance to be nationally listed, make a significant contribution to the local area in terms of their historical and/or architectural characteristics. Currently there are over 250 of these buildings, many of which were built in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries, on the Council's List of Locally Important Buildings and are considered an important part of the District's local heritage.

### **Conservation Areas**

- 5.14 In Three Rivers there are 22 Conservation Areas which make a very significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the District. These include the settlements around ancient commons such as Croxley Green, Chorleywood and Sarratt; the historic cores of the settlements of Rickmansworth and Abbots Langley; and distinctive areas of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century housing such as Loudwater, Moor Park and Heronsgate; the first Chartist settlement.
- 5.15 Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the special architectural or historic interest, quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of open spaces. Designation also takes into account the need to protect trees, hedges, walls, railings and other characteristic features. Once designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character and appearance.
- 5.16 The Council will continue with a programme of Conservation Area Appraisals which will assess the existing boundaries, character and important features of the areas and develop Management Plans which will be used as a material consideration when assessing planning applications. Applicants should also refer to the Design Supplementary Planning Document which will include relevant guidance for development affecting Conservation Areas.

### **Historic Parks and Gardens**

- 5.17 Historic parks and gardens complement the historic buildings and landscapes of the District and are an important feature of the area. Some are listed in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Within Three Rivers the grounds at Moor Park

Mansion are listed as Grade II\* because of their important contribution to the historic, recreational and conservation value of the landscape. Part of Cassiobury Park, which is a Grade II Listed Park, also falls within Three Rivers District. In addition, there are other unregistered parks and gardens in the District which include Rickmansworth Park, The Grove, Oxhey Grange, Sandy Lodge, Redheath, Micklefield Green and Chorleywood House. Although these currently fall below the threshold for inclusion in the English Heritage Register, they are of importance locally and as such their character will be protected from harmful development.

### **Archaeology**

5.18 There are 18 Areas of Archaeological Significance in the District. Information and advice about these and other non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest may be obtained from the historic Environment Unit of Hertfordshire County Council. The Areas of Archaeological Significance are subject to regular revision and the absence of designation should not always be taken to mean that there is no archaeological potential. Prospective developers should contact the County Council to obtain the most up-to-date information and establish whether there is potential archaeological interest and establish the need for investigation and evaluation at an early stage.

5.19 Where it is deemed a development site has archaeological potential, the developer will be required to commission an archaeological evaluation to define the character and condition of any remains. This will include the character and depth of remains together with the impact of development upon the remains, including any mitigation measures to avoid unnecessary damage.

### **Enabling Development or Alteration of Heritage Assets**

5.20 The main aim of policies on heritage assets is to protect them from harm and to recognise the contribution they make to the environment. In order to keep heritage assets such as Listed Buildings in use and thereby secure their contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, allowing alternative uses or sympathetic development or alteration may be acceptable. Guidance on enabling development is contained within the English Heritage booklet “Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets”, available at [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk).

### **Climate Change and Heritage Assets**

5.21 Responding to climate change and promoting the use of renewable energy has also been identified as a priority for the Council within the Core Strategy. However, it is recognised that there may be cases when there are conflicts between preserving the past and making adaptations for the future. Therefore, with regard to renewable energy technologies, the Council will endeavour to help applicants identify appropriate solutions to minimise any impact on the heritage asset at the pre-application stage. Where conflict between climate change objectives and the conservation of heritage assets is unavoidable, the public benefit of mitigating the effects of climate change will be weighed against any harm to the significance of the heritage asset in accordance with National Policy.

### **Further Information for Applicants**

5.22 Planning applications for development proposals (including applications for Conservation Area Consent for demolitions) affecting heritage assets, will be determined in accordance with:

- Core Strategy and other Development Management Policies
- Legislative provisions and national policy

- Guidance contained in specific Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (where they exist) or other relevant guidance documents
- Design SPD

5.23 Applications that are for, or that could impact upon, a heritage asset or its setting must be accompanied by a Historic Environment Statement. This must include a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance, and should be assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary given the application's impact. It should set out and explain the key features of the proposed development and its likely impacts on the heritage asset and its setting and provide justification for the proposed works. Development in this context includes any works which require Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Consent, as well as planning permission. Further information on the Council's requirement can be found in the Validation Checklist.

5.24 Where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, a desk-based Archaeological Assessment must be submitted. If this is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field survey and Written Scheme of Investigation will also be required.

### DM3 The Historic Built Environment

a) When assessing applications for development, there will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of heritage assets and to putting heritage assets to viable and appropriate uses to secure their future protection. Applications will only be supported where they sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment.

#### **b) Listed Buildings**

The Council will preserve the District's Listed Buildings and will only support applications where:

- The extension/alteration would not adversely affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest both internally or externally or its wider setting
- Any change of use would preserve its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest and ensure its continued use/viability.

Applications involving the demolition of a Listed Building will only be granted in wholly exceptional circumstances.

#### **c) Conservation Areas**

Within Conservation Areas development will only be permitted if the proposal:

- Is of a design and scale that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area
- Uses building materials, finishes, including those for features such as walls, railings, gates and hard surfacing, that are appropriate to the local context
- Retains historically significant boundaries, important open spaces and other elements of the area's established pattern of development, character and historic value, including gardens, roadside banks and verges
- Retains and restores, where relevant, traditional features such as shop fronts, walls, railings, paved surfaces and street furniture, and improves the condition of structures worthy of retention
- Does not harm important views into, out of or within the Conservation area
- Protects trees, hedgerows and other significant landscape features and incorporates landscaping appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

vii) Results, where relevant, in the removal of unsympathetic features and the restoration or reinstatement of missing features.

d) Within Conservation Areas permission for development involving demolition or substantial demolition will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The structure to be demolished makes no material contribution to the special character or appearance of the area; or,
- ii) It can be demonstrated that the structure is wholly beyond repair or incapable of beneficial use; or
- iii) It can be demonstrated that the removal of the structure and its subsequent replacement with a new building and/or open space would lead to the enhancement of the Conservation Area.

e) The Council will not normally grant consent for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area-unless permission has been granted for redevelopment of the site.

f) Permission will not be granted for development outside but near to a Conservation Area if it adversely affects the setting, character, appearance of or views in to or out of that Conservation Area.

g) The Council will only permit development proposals including solutions to shop front security and/or use of standardised shop front designs, fascias or advertisement displays in a Conservation Area if they:

- i) Are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- ii) Respect the scale, proportions, character and materials of construction of the upper part of the building and adjoining buildings and the street scene in general;
- iii) Incorporate traditional materials where the age and character of the building makes this appropriate.

Generally, totally internally illuminated fascias or projecting signs will not be permitted. The Council will also not support applications for additional signs that would result in a proliferation of, and excess amount of, advertisement material on any individual building or group of buildings.

#### **h) Locally Important Buildings**

The Council encourages the retention of Locally Important Buildings. Where planning permission is required for the alteration or extension of a Locally Important Building, permission will only be granted where historic or architectural features are retained or enhanced.

#### **i) Historic Parks and Gardens**

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would cause unacceptable harm to historic parks or gardens (both registered and unregistered), their settings or public views into, out of, or within them. Applicants are required to submit a Historic Landscape Assessment prior to the determination of the application. This may include an archaeological assessment if located within an area of archaeological importance.

#### **j) Archaeology**

Where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, it must be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation. There is a presumption against any harm to Scheduled Monuments and heritage assets with archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments. Where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset's significance

(archaeological interest) is justified, planning conditions will be included in any permission to ensure that an adequate record is made of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost. This will be secured through an archaeological written scheme of investigation (WSI) which must include provision for appropriate publication of the evidence.

### *Policy Links*

<b>National Policy (others may also be relevant)</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>Related Core Strategy Policies</b>	CP1: Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development CP12: Design of Development
<b>Core Strategy Strategic Objective</b>	S1, S10

### *Further Guidance*

<b>Supplementary Planning Documents</b>	Design SPD Relevant Conservation Area Appraisals
<b>Additional Information</b>	Hertfordshire Building Futures: <a href="http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures">http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures</a> National Heritage List for England: <a href="http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/">http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/</a>

### **Reasoned Justification**

5.25 Protection of the District's heritage is an important function of the Council, particularly through the determination of planning applications. Policy DM3 seeks to reflect national policy and includes clarification on what characteristics will be considered when determining development within the historic environment of Three Rivers. This approach will contribute directly to Core Strategy Objective 10: protecting and enhancing the historic environment and unique character of the District.