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## Introduction

Increasingly the recording of heritage assets<sup>1</sup> is becoming a requirement of the planning process. The District Planning Authority, for example, may require heritage asset analysis and recording during pre-application discussions with a developer. Recording is also necessary when a condition is attached to a relevant Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent. Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012):

*'Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'*

(NPPF, paragraph 141)

## Why record heritage assets?

The district of Bassetlaw has a variety of heritage assets. Buildings and below ground remains have the potential to yield new evidence about past human activity through expert investigation. Heritage assets are a record of our social, economic and cultural history. The understanding gained by undertaking recording increases our appreciation and stewardship of the historic environment. This allows us to better protect and understand the district's heritage for future generations.

## What type of heritage assets need recording?

The District Planning Authority may require any type of heritage asset to be recorded. These may include areas of below ground archaeology or buildings such as churches/chapels, farmhouses, dovecotes, barns or industrial buildings, amongst others. It is not necessarily the type of heritage asset that determines whether any recording is required. Rather, it is the nature of the works proposed that will most commonly be the determining factor. The majority of recording exercises involve buildings.

Recording is likely to be necessary for any heritage asset where there would be a full or substantial loss of significance. This could include:

- ❖ External alterations that would result in a significant change to its character or appearance;
- ❖ Internal alterations to a heritage asset (primarily listed buildings), which would result in a significant change to its character, appearance or layout;
- ❖ Where dismantling and rebuild is proposed;
- ❖ Where features of architectural interest may be revealed, altered or hidden as a result of the works proposed;
- ❖ Where a building is being converted;

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<sup>1</sup> Heritage asset: 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). (NPPF, Annex 2)

- ❖ Where complete demolition of a building is proposed<sup>2</sup>; or
- ❖ Where archaeology is identified.

### How to record heritage assets

It is expected that the recording of heritage assets will follow available professional standards and guidance such as the Institute of Field Archaeologists 'Standards and Guidance'. The most commonly referred to guidance is the Royal Commission of the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) advice note 'Recording Historic Buildings' (1996). This guidance has been revised and expanded by English Heritage in their publication 'Understanding Historic Buildings – a guide to good recording practice' (2006). These documents define 4 levels of building recording (see below) that are frequently used in conditions attached to Planning Permissions and Listed Building Consents.

The recording should be presented in the form of a report. The report should contain:

- ❖ A written analysis (including an archive assessment);
- ❖ A drawn survey (annotated where necessary); and
- ❖ A photographic survey

In producing the report the following guiding principles should be considered:

- ❖ A record should chart the historical development of the building or site, explaining and illustrating what is significant and providing dates for significant parts or phases of development wherever possible;
- ❖ A record should aim to be accurate, clear and concise;
- ❖ The scope and level of the record and its limitations should be stated;
- ❖ A record should make a clear distinction between observation and interpretation, thereby allowing data to be reinterpreted at a later date;
- ❖ Wherever practicable, a record should take account of the site's context, including its wider archaeology (known and potential), whether in terms of below-ground deposits or of landscape archaeology;
- ❖ A record should include an indication of any sources consulted;
- ❖ A record should identify its author/surveyor and give the date of creation. Any subsequent amendments should be similarly endorsed;
- ❖ The report and supporting material should be produced in a medium which can be copied easily and which ensures archival stability; and
- ❖ A record should be made accessible through deposit in a permanent archive.

Those conducting the recording work should be mindful at all times of:

- ❖ The rights and sensitivities of owners and occupants; and
- ❖ The health and safety implications of working in historic buildings.

Source: **Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice** (English Heritage, February 2006).

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<sup>2</sup> There is a presumption against the demolition of heritage assets in Policy DM8 of the Bassetlaw Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD.

## A brief guide to recording levels

Unless a recording brief has been requested by the District Planning Authority to be agreed before recording work commences, conditions on Planning Permissions or Listed Building Consents will make reference to a level of recording numbered 1 to 4 that refers specifically to national guidance<sup>3</sup>. Level 1 is very basic, for example, and requires only a basic level of recording, whilst Level 4 represents the highest rank of recording and analysis. Each level corresponds to a minimum specification in which additional bespoke elements may be added by the District Planning Authority. The recording level specified will usually depend on both the nature of the building and the purpose for which the record is intended.

Below is a quick summary of the levels. It is recommended that this guidance is read in conjunction with advice set out in *'Recording historic buildings'* (RCHME) and *'Understanding Historic Buildings – a guide to good recording practice'* (English Heritage) before beginning the recording project.

### ❖ Level 1

This is essentially a **visual record**. Written information should be the minimum to identify the building's location, age, type, materials, use and when and whom compiled the report. Drawings would normally be sketches of the plan form, sections and elevations of the exterior (interior of specific architectural or historic features). General photographs of the exterior as well as any specific architectural or historic features (both internal and external) should be taken.

### ❖ Level 2

This is a **descriptive record**. Similar to Level 1, but in addition both the interior and exterior will be described and photographed. The written account will make conclusions regarding the building's development and use(s), but will not discuss in any detail the evidence on which these conclusions are made. Measured drawings should be made of cross sections, elevations and structural details, such as roof trusses. External and internal photographs of the building(s) should be taken including any items associated with the use of the building(s), i.e. machinery.

### ❖ Level 3

Level 3 is an **analytical record**. Building on Levels 1 and 2, there should be a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The evidence on which the analysis has been based should be included. This is likely to include documentary evidence such as old maps, photographs, written accounts referring to the house, past owners, architect etc. A full set of measured drawings, including architectural features i.e. cornicing, architraves etc where appropriate and a full internal and external photographic record.

### ❖ Level 4

This level provides a **comprehensive analytical record** and is appropriate for buildings of special importance. Level 4 builds on the analysis of Level 3 but investigates the full range of available resources and should discuss the building's significance in terms of architectural, social, regional or economic history. The range of research, drawings and photographs is likely to be greater than that at Levels 1-3.

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<sup>3</sup> Levels are identified in *Recording Historic Buildings* (RCHME, 1996) and *Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (English Heritage, 2006).

### The levels of recording at a glance:

Level	Record	Written	Drawings	Photographs
1	Visual	Simple record	Sketch (usually exterior only)	General
2	Descriptive	Basic record	Measured drawings	General (external and internal)
3	Analytical	Full record	Measured plans, sections and elevations	Comprehensive
4	Comprehensive	Full record	Measured plans, sections, elevations, details, reconstructions	Comprehensive

### Who should undertake a heritage asset recording exercise?

For the most basic recording exercises, much of the necessary information is likely to have been produced for any planning application or application for listed building consent submitted. Architects plans, location plans and photographs may be suitable to be included in the report and anyone confident enough who has a basic understanding of architecture and history can compile the necessary written information. If you are not confident or competent to conduct the recording, however, then it is advisable to employ a professional. This is always advisable for Level 3 or 4 recordings and sometimes the request for the recording to be conducted by a suitably qualified professional will be a requirement of a planning or listed building consent decision. Large developers will often have their own consultants to carry out recording works, but for smaller developers and householders you may need to employ an architectural historian, conservation architect, or a historic building surveyor to carry out the work.

### At what stage should a heritage asset be recorded?

A heritage asset should always be recorded before any development commences. It is always worth considering the need to record the asset at the earliest stage. Undertaking a recording exercise prior to submitting a planning or listed building consent application can help to inform and direct the nature of the proposed alterations or development and will ensure that the building or site is fully understood before plans are drawn and submitted<sup>4</sup>. This is particularly useful for large or complex buildings and sites. Where pre-application discussion has been undertaken with the planning department, there may be a requirement to submit recording with the planning or listed building consent application. The need for recording, however, is often a condition with any planning or listed building consent approval where substantial alterations or demolition is proposed. Outlined below is a checklist to ensure that consideration is given to building recording:

<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with the advice given in the Council's 'Guide to Heritage Impact Assessments' which are required for most applications that involve a heritage asset.

1. Undertake initial discussions with the planning department to determine whether recording should be undertaken prior to submission of an application.
2. Determine which level of recording is necessary for the building following recognised professional standards such as those published by English Heritage. Confirm with the planning department that the proposed level is suitable for the building.
3. If necessary, employ a suitably qualified and experienced contractor to undertake the programme of recording.
4. Submit the completed report as part of a full planning application or listed building consent application. Alternatively, the report may be submitted to discharge a condition of an approved application. 3 copies should be submitted. An electronic version is always appreciated and can be submitted as one of the 3 copies.

### Further Information

- English Heritage (2006) *Understanding Historic Buildings – a guide to good recording practice*. London: English Heritage.  
[http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Understanding\\_Historic\\_Buildings\\_1.pdf](http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Understanding_Historic_Buildings_1.pdf)  
[http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Understanding\\_Historic\\_Buildings\\_2.pdf](http://www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Understanding_Historic_Buildings_2.pdf)
- RCHME (1996) *Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). London: English Heritage.
- Institute of Field Archaeologists (1996) *Standard and guidance - for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*.  
<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/codes/build2.pdf>

## Contact Us

For further advice on Heritage Asset Recording or any other issues relating to conservation and heritage, please contact one of the Council's Conservation Officers:

- ❖ Michael Tagg: [Michael.Tagg@bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Tagg@bassetlaw.gov.uk); (01909) 533484; or
- ❖ Simon Britt: [Simon.Britt@bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.Britt@bassetlaw.gov.uk); (01909) 533427.

For help and advice on submitting applications for Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission, please contact Planning Customer Services:

- ❖ Tel: (01909) 533264, (01909) 533220 or (01909) 534430; or
- ❖ Email: [planning@bassetlaw.gov.uk](mailto:planning@bassetlaw.gov.uk).

Alternatively, please write to:

**Planning Policy & Conservation/Planning Customer Services  
Bassetlaw District Council  
Queen's Buildings  
Potter Street  
Worksop  
Nottinghamshire  
S80 2AH**



**Grade II listed barn at North Leverton**