

## 17. Conserving the Historic Environment

- 17.1 The borough's historic environment is diverse. It includes the market towns of Berkhamsted and Tring, the planned urban form of Hemel Hempstead New Town, villages and hamlets, the remains of Roman villas and settlement, the motte and bailey castle at Berkhamsted, historic parks and gardens (for example at Ashridge and Markyate Cell), Grim's Ditch, the Grand Union Canal and historic landscapes (see paragraph 16.6).
- 17.2 There are national and local designations to protect the historic environment, but there are also undesignated heritage assets which merit conservation. National designations comprise listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and registered parks and gardens. Local designations comprise conservation areas, locally listed buildings and areas of archaeological significance. Undesignated heritage assets include historic buildings, gardens, townscape and landscape, and areas of potential archaeological interest.
- 17.3 All heritage assets are important and should be conserved. The weight given to the specific form of protection or conservation will vary according to the importance of that asset.
- 17.4 Historic features add tradition, continuity and character to a place, as well as being an asset for the economy, the environment and the wider community. People gain enjoyment from visiting memorable places. There are education and community benefits from rediscovering our heritage and crafts, like the heritage of the paper making industry in Apsley. There are significant benefits to the environment through the reuse of historic buildings. The promotion of cultural heritage and tourism, associated with historic places, is a driver of economic development. Higher land values are invariably linked with such design excellence.
- 17.5 The quality of the historic environment is sensitive to change from development and people and even the climate. Changes in economic and social conditions, as well as technological developments, can also mean that the original purpose for which the buildings were designed is outdated and adaptation may be needed. Increasing economic pressures have also resulted in higher numbers of buildings becoming 'redundant.' This is often the case with agricultural and industrial buildings, places of worship and public houses, with a trend towards seeking higher value alternative uses such as housing. Climate change has resulted in more incidents of high winds and heavy rainfall which can have a detrimental impact on the fabric of buildings. Renewable energy installations can also affect the appearance of a building and its setting.
- 17.6 High quality design and proper maintenance can prevent the loss of original character in buildings. Conversion of buildings to alternative uses can extend the life of buildings and is preferable to demolition. Infilling and replacement with new

characterless buildings and public realm should be avoided. This applies to both designated and undesignated historic assets.

17.7 The Council needs to evaluate heritage assets and their settings on a continual basis. This ongoing appraisal will inform further local designations and future management plans. It will include a programme of conservation area appraisals and a 'Heritage at Risk' review.

17.8 Conservation area appraisals will analyse the character and appearance of each conservation area and identify any negative features or issues that could be addressed through development. Boundaries of conservation areas will be reviewed. The 'Heritage at Risk' review will identify vulnerable heritage assets: the Council will act to ensure their protection, using enforcement action, Article 4 Directions, building preservation and urgent work notices, spot listing and applications for funding.

#### **POLICY CS27: Quality of the Historic Environment**

**All development will favour the conservation of heritage assets.**

**The integrity, setting and distinctiveness of designated and undesignated heritage assets will be protected, conserved and if appropriate enhanced.**

**Development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas. Negative features and problems identified in conservation area appraisals will be ameliorated or removed.**

**Features of known or potential archaeological interest will be surveyed, recorded and wherever possible retained.**

**Supplementary planning documents will provide further guidance.**

#### **Monitoring:**

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Target(s)</b>
Number of listed buildings	No net loss of listed buildings
Number of buildings on the local list	-
Proportion of conservation areas with up-to-date appraisals	100%
Number of buildings on the at risk register	0 buildings lost

#### **Delivery will be achieved by:**

- the Development Management DPD;
- having regard to conservation area appraisals;
- developing the Historic Environment SPD;
- developing the Urban Design SPD;
- partnership working with the Archaeology team at the County Council; and
- reviewing and maintaining inventories of heritage assets and management plans.