

**CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING
LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS**

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1 Introduction

The *criteria for identifying local heritage assets* shall be used by the District Council to determine whether elements of the historic environment in North West Leicestershire should be identified as local heritage assets. For the purposes of these criteria, elements of the historic environment may include areas, buildings, earthworks and gardens.

1.1 Statutory context

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as an area “of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The District Council has a duty to determine periodically which parts of the district meet this definition and to “designate those areas as conservation areas” (Section 69(1)). The council also has a duty to review conservation areas periodically “to determine whether any further parts should be designated” and to “designate those parts accordingly” (Section 69(2)).

Under Section 1 of the Act, the Secretary of State “shall compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and may amend any list so compiled” (hence referred to as the ‘statutory list’). Under Section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Secretary of State “shall compile and maintain a schedule of monuments”. Under Section 8C of the National Heritage Act 1983, Historic England may “compile a register of gardens of special historic interest”.

The District Council may compile a list of local heritage assets; the list may include buildings, earthworks and gardens. These are not statutory functions.

1.2 Statutory criteria

The Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has issued *principles of selection for listing buildings* (2010). These set out the general principles that are applied when deciding whether a building should be added to the statutory list.

Age and rarity

- The statutory list includes most buildings constructed before 1840. After this date, “because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary”.

The *principles of selection* state that a building is more likely to have special interest when there are “fewer surviving examples of its kind”.

Architectural interest

- The statutory list includes buildings of “importance in their architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship” as well as “nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques”.

Historic interest

- The list includes buildings that “illustrate important aspects of the nation’s social, economic, cultural, or military history” as well as those that “have close historic associations with nationally important people”.

Group value

- The list includes buildings of which “the exterior contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part”, particularly those that form part of “an important architectural or historic unity or a fine example of planning, or where there is a historical functional relationship between a group of buildings”.

1.3 Planning policy context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. It advises that, although some heritage assets are not designated, “the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset” is still a material planning consideration (paragraph 135). This consideration should be taken into account in determining any application for Planning Permission relating to such a heritage asset.

Paragraph 169 of the NPPF advises that “local planning authorities should have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area”. Compiling a list of local heritage assets would contribute to this evidence base.

2 Criteria for identifying local heritage assets

The following four criteria shall be used by the District Council to determine whether elements of the historic environment in North West Leicestershire should be identified as local heritage assets.

The first three criteria (*age and rarity, architectural interest and historic interest*) may be termed 'desk-based' criteria. That is, a desk-based assessment may be used to determine whether an element of the historic environment fulfils one of these criteria.

To be identified as a local heritage asset, an element of the historic environment should fulfil one of the desk-based criteria and the *field assessment* criterion.

2.1 Age and rarity

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess qualities of age?

Is there evidence that it predates an era of mass production and mass transportation? Does it exhibit distinctive local traditions, rather than materials or designs imported from elsewhere?

- Is there evidence that the building predates the reign of Queen Victoria (1837)? Can the building be identified on a map surveyed c.1840?
- Does the building otherwise predate an important local watershed such as a population explosion or the arrival of an early transportation route?¹

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess qualities of age when considered in the context of its type? Is it a particularly early example of its type?

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess qualities of rarity? Is it one of the few examples of its type that survive intact? If the building is a **school**, does it predate the Education Act of 1870?

In the case of an area, is there a concentration of buildings (included on the statutory list or not) that possess qualities of age and rarity?

¹ Note the Midland Railway Company's Leicester to Burton line, via Coalville and Ashby-de-la-Zouch (1849).

2.2 Architectural interest

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess special architectural interest?

Does the building possess aesthetic value, either by conscious design or fortuitously? Does the building exhibit quality in its architectural design, craftsmanship or decoration? Is it a locally important example of a particular building type or technique?

- Does the area, building, earthwork or garden appear in a recognised architectural gazetteer?
- Does the building exhibit quality in its architectural design? Is it the work of a nationally or locally important designer (architect, landscape architect or civil engineer)?

An assessment of the importance of an architect, landscape architect or civil engineer should be based on:

- The number of listed buildings that they designed, considered in proportion to the length of their career;
- The absolute number of grade I or grade II* listed buildings that they designed.

A fuller assessment may also take into account other factors including:

- The number of buildings they designed that have been recognised as making a particularly positive contribution to the character of a conservation area;
- The number of buildings they designed that have been included on the list of local heritage assets for other reasons (e.g. their inclusion in a key gazetteer);
- Whether they were a fellow or associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) or an equivalent organisation.

- Does the building exhibit quality in its craftsmanship or decoration? Is it the work of a nationally or locally important builder or craftsman?

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess architectural group value? In the case of an area, is there a concentration of buildings (included on the statutory list or not) that possess special architectural interest? Does the area possess aesthetic value, either by conscious design or fortuitously? Is the area a fine example of planning? Was it laid out by a locally important designer?

2.3 Historic interest

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess special historic interest? Does the building illustrate an important aspect of local economic, social, cultural, or military history? Does it have a close historic association with a nationally or locally important person, company or organisation?

- Is there an account of the area, building, earthwork or garden in a recognised county history or archaeological journal?
- Does the area, building, earthwork or garden illustrate an important aspect of local economic history? Does it appear in a recognised gazetteer of industrial archaeology?
- Does the area, building, earthwork or garden illustrate an important aspect of local social and cultural history? If the building is a nonconformist **chapel**, does it appear in a recognised gazetteer of this building type?

Does the area, building, earthwork or garden possess historic group value? In the case of an area, is there a concentration of buildings (included on the statutory list or not) that together exhibit historic unity? Do the buildings in the area have interest because of a historic functional relationship?

2.4 Field assessment

Does the building retain its authentic character? Have later alterations or extensions preserved or enhanced the significance of the building? If the building is significant for its age and rarity, does it retain a substantial proportion of its original fabric? Please refer to the field assessment checklist at appendix two.

Appendix one: Key gazetteers

The following gazetteers have been chosen because they are quoted as sources in listed building descriptions in the East Midlands. They are selective (as opposed to exhaustive) gazetteers. Other gazetteers may be chosen on the same basis.

Architectural interest

Pevsner N (1984) *Buildings of England: Leicestershire (Second Edition)*
– (1866 to 1942) *The Builder (periodical)*

Important designers

– (2004) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
Curl J (2006) *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (Second Edition)*

Historic interest

Nichols J (1795-1811) *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*
– (1862 to present) *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (periodical)*
Page W et al (1907 to 1955) *Victoria County of the History of Leicester (volumes I to III)*²
Mee A (1937) *The King's England: Leicestershire and Rutland*

Nonconformist chapels

Stell C (1986) *Nonconformist chapels and meeting houses in central England*

Interest to economic history

Smith D (1965) *Industrial archaeology of the East Midlands*
Palmer M (1992) *Industrial landscapes of the East Midlands*

Historic association

– (2004) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

² The *Victoria History of the County of Leicester* is a work in progress. There is no 'topographical volume' for the Hundred of West Goscote (equivalent to the modern NW Leicestershire District) but a draft history of Castle Donington parish was prepared in 2014. See www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/leicestershire.

Appendix two: Field assessment checklist

Survival: extent	
Does the building survive intact?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Survival: location	
Does the building survive in its original location?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Height	
Does the building retain its authentic height?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Emphasis	
Does the building retain its authentic emphasis?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Plan form: overall	
Overall, does the building retain its authentic plan form?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Plan form: elaboration	
Does the building retain features that elaborate the plan form?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a simple plan form been kept free of elaborating features?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Roof shape: overall	
Overall, does the building retain its authentic roof shape?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Roof shape: elaboration	
Does the building retain features that elaborate the roof shape?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a simple roof shape been kept free of elaborating features?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Walling materials	
Does the building retain its authentic walling materials?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Roofing materials	
Does the building retain its authentic roofing materials?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix three: Glossary

Authentic

Literally, the term *authentic* refers to work undertaken in the original or traditional manner. For a building constructed before 1945, the term *authentic character* may refer to its original character, or to a character resulting from alterations or additions undertaken in a traditional manner. For a building constructed after 1945, the term *authentic character* will usually refer to its original character.

Building

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the term *building* shall refer to any structure or erection, or any part of a building as so defined, although it shall not refer to plant or machinery comprised in a building. This definition is broad enough to encompass, for example, items of street furniture.

Character

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the term *character* refers to the essential or broad characteristics of a building – i.e. its scale, height, massing, materials and emphasis. In this sense, it is possible to alter the appearance of a building without altering its character.

Elaboration

Literally, the term *elaboration* refers to the addition of detail. *Elaborating features* may include bay windows, chimneys, dormers, porches etc. A simple building may lose its authentic character through the addition of elaborating features. Conversely, a complex building may lose its authentic character through the removal of elaborating features.

Emphasis

In accordance with national guidance, the term *emphasis* refers to the vertical or horizontal emphasis of an elevation. Emphasis may be determined by the proportions of door and window openings, or by the use of architectural details such as pilasters or sill bands.

Heritage Asset

In accordance with the NPPF, the term *heritage asset* shall refer to an element of the historic environment positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. The term *designated heritage asset* shall refer to those heritage assets that have been designated under relevant legislation in recognition of their degree of significance. They include listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments.

Significance

In accordance with the NPPF, the term *significance* shall refer to the value that a heritage asset has to this and future generations because of its architectural or historic interest.