



Wyre Forest District

Site Allocations and Policies Plan and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan

Examination

Statement of Common Ground 2 (SOCG2)

English Heritage

14th January

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT SITE ALLOCATIONS AND POLICIES AND
KIDDERMINSTER CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC
STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND – ENGLISH HERITAGE**

This “Statement of Common of Ground” has been developed in response to representations received from English Heritage on the Pre-Submission Publication version of the Site Allocations and Policies and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPD.

Officers from Wyre Forest District Council met English Heritage on 17/12/2012 at which the representations made by English Heritage were discussed.

The table attached at Appendix 1 outlines those areas where agreement has been reached on common ground for the Site Allocations and Policies. It also outlines areas where it is considered that further discussion and clarification is required during the relevant hearing sessions.

Appendix 1 sets out some proposed minor amendments to the Site Allocations and Policies in order to address the representations and establish Common Ground. Both parties consider that these proposed amendments are minor and do not go to the heart of soundness of the Plan.

Following the meeting, English Heritage submitted more detailed comments on, and suggested amendments to, policy SAL.UP6. The policy set out at Appendix 3 incorporates those amendments which the District Council feels are appropriate.

The table attached at Appendix 2 outlines those areas where agreement has been reached on common ground for the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan. It also outlines areas where it is considered that further discussion and clarification is required during the relevant hearing sessions.

Appendix 2 also sets out some proposed minor amendments to the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan in order to address the representations and establish Common Ground.

All of the proposed amendments agreed through statement of common ground discussions have been incorporated into the table of main modifications or the table of minor amendments as considered appropriate.

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Appendix 1 - Site Allocations and Policies DPD

English Heritage’s Representation	Paragraph / Policy	Director of Economic Prosperity and Place Response	Resulting Minor Amendment to the Site Allocations and Policies?	Response from English Heritage	Common Ground Established?
<u>SALPP216</u> English Heritage welcomes the clear references in the policy to the importance of proposals respecting the appearance and the character of the local area.	SAL.DPL4 Flat Conversions	Support is welcomed.	N/A	Agreed	Yes
<u>SALPP217</u> English Heritage welcomes the inclusion of a strengthened reference in the policy and reasoned justification to the historic environment and heritage assets of the Wyre Forest.	SAL.GPB5 Supporting Major Tourist Attractions	Support is welcomed.	N/A	Agreed	Yes
<u>SALPP218</u> English Heritage welcomes the reference in the policy and reasoned justification to the importance of taking into account the historic environment and heritage assets in the consideration of renewable energy proposals.	SAL.CC6 Renewable Energy	Support is welcomed.	N/A	Agreed	Yes
<u>SALPP219</u> English Heritage welcomes in principle the inclusion of this policy and the added detail in provides in conjunction with Policy CP11 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. These policies together with the commitment to prepare a	SAL.UP6 Safeguarding the Historic Environment	Meetings have been held with English Heritage to discuss amendments to the text of policy SAL.UP6	See appendix 3.	Partial agreement.	Partially

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<p>Supplementary Planning Document on the Historic Environment serve overall to provide a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the District's historic environment.</p> <p>There are, however, aspects of the policy and reasoned justification which are inconsistent with national guidance on the historic environment as set out in the NPPF and require further clarification. Our key concerns relate to the following areas:</p> <p>i) the appropriate coverage of heritage assets of archaeological significance as part of the policy;</p> <p>ii) the consistency and clarity of the policy content dealing with harm to heritage assets (a-c) and the reasoned justification particularly 7.58;</p> <p>iii) the consideration of enhancing the setting of conservation areas (e.g. NPPF 137);</p> <p>iv) consistency of terminology, especially in relation to significance;</p> <p>v) the clarity of the information requirements for heritage statements as currently described in the reasoned justification and whether this type of information might</p>		to overcome these objections.			

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<p>be better located in an appendix to the plan;</p> <p>vi) the compatibility of the reference to enabling development (7.57) and English Heritage's guidance on Enabling Development and the extant PPS5 Practice Guide.</p> <p>We believe that the above points can be addressed by amendments to the text and we would be happy to continue to work with the Council to resolve our representation.</p>					
<p><u>SALPP220</u></p> <p>English Heritage welcomes the prominence and emphasis the policy gives to securing high quality design.</p> <p>To further improve the clarity of the policy and its consistency with national guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (Requiring Good Design), we recommend the following minor amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion (i): Amend the last part of the sentence to ‘...transport infrastructure and landmarks, <i>and draw on the contribution of the historic environment to local</i> character and distinctiveness.’ • Criterion (iii): Expand the sentence to include ‘... common building 	<p>SAL.UP7 Quality Design and Local Distinctiveness</p>	<p>Amend Criteria (i), (iii) and (xi) as proposed.</p>	<p>SALMOD39</p> <p>Criterion (i) Amend last part of sentence ‘...transport infrastructure and landmarks, <i>and draw on the contribution of the historic environment to local</i> character and distinctiveness.’</p> <p>☑ Criterion (iii): Expand the sentence to include ‘... common building</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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<p>common building line, <i>historic street pattern, and skyline</i> .'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion (xi): Include a reference to 'materials' e.g. '.. traditional design <u>and materials</u>...' 			<p>line, <i>historic street pattern, and skyline</i>.'</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Criterion (xi): amend as follows '.. traditional design <i>and materials</i> ...'.</p>		
<p><u>SALPP221</u></p> <p>English Heritage welcomes the specific inclusion in the policy of criteria relating to heritage assets.</p> <p>To improve consistency with national guidance we recommend a minor amendment to point (i) as follows: ‘<u>Conserve the significance of a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, including its setting</u>’.</p>	<p>SAL.UP10 - Advertisements</p>	<p>Amend text as suggested (i) ‘<i>Conserve the significance of a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, including its setting</i>’.</p>	<p>SALMOD43</p> <p>Amend point 2 (i) as follows: “<i>Conserve the significance of a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, including its setting</i>” .</p> <p>Add to end of para.7.94 as follows:</p> <p>“...and that their significance and landscape setting is not harmed.”</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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<p><u>SALPP222</u></p> <p>English Heritage welcomes the clear reference in the reasoned justification to the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project as part of the evidence base for the plan and its implementation. We consider, however, that the policy requires modification to fully reflect and positively take forward the findings of the Project and its application in helping to inform proposals which achieve sustainable development for the District's historic farmsteads.</p> <p>We recommend the following changes:</p> <p>1) Under the first section 'Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings' introduce a new first point along the lines of; '<i>Proposals are based on an appraisal of the character and significance of the farmstead as a whole, its landscape setting and sensitivity to and potential for change</i>'. This is in order to establish the key principle that farmsteads should be considered as a whole rather than a focus on individual buildings.</p> <p>2) Amend the existing point (i) to allow for a more informed approach to whether some element of new build might offer a more appropriate and sustainable option than the conversion of a sensitive historic building. For example - '<i>.... or the addition of a large-scale element</i></p>	<p>SAL.UP11 Re-Use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings</p>	<p>Make minor amendments as suggested by English Heritage.</p>	<p>SALMOD46 Amend point (ii) as follows: "<i>...fabric, character, significance or setting...</i>" Introduce new point (vii) as follows: '<i>If proposals involve the re-use or adaptation of a farmstead then the proposals should be based on an appraisal of the character and significance of the farmstead as a whole, its landscape setting and sensitivity to and potential for change</i>'. Under Residential Development section expand second sentence:</p>	<p>Requested that the additional point added be point (i) as it is strategic. Agreed to amend.</p> <p>Amend the last sentence of para 7.101 to read:</p> <p>"Any proposed developments should have full regard to the project and the accompanying Worcestershire Farmsteads Assessment Guidance.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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<p><i>of new build.'</i></p> <p>3) Include in point (ii) a reference to significance e.g. ‘...fabric, character, <i>significance</i> or setting...’;</p> <p>4) Under the section Residential Development, expand the first paragraph to also address considerations relating to sustainability or historical significance e.g. ‘... <i>or for reasons of sustainability or historical significance an alternative use would be preferable , ...</i>’. This is in order to take account of situations where residential reuse may be the most viable and appropriate use consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.</p> <p>5) Amend 7.94 to also refer to the importance of ensuring that their significance and landscape setting is not harmed.</p> <p>6) Amend the first sentence in 7.97 to also refer to the significance of a building;</p> <p>7) Amend the opening sentence of 7.98 to be more positive and reflective of the influence of well informed and good quality design e.g. ‘ <i>Residential conversions can be detrimental..</i>’.</p> <p>8) Update the reasoned justification at 7.10 to reflect the latest work Worcestershire County Council is undertaking</p>			<p>“...or for reasons of sustainability or historical significance an alternative use would be preferable,...” Amend first sentence of paragraph 7.97: “...character of the building, its significance...”</p> <p>Amend first sentence of paragraph 7.98 to” Residential conversions can be detrimental..”</p> <p>Paragraph 7.101 – Add in new 2nd sentence as follows: “Worcestershire County Council is continuing to work on the project.”</p>		

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on further refining the evidence base and accompanying planning tools of the West Midlands Project.					
<p><u>SALPP223</u></p> <p>This is a highly sensitive site due to its location within the conservation area as well as its wider townscape setting, this including views across the site from the wider area such as from the riverside. In recognition of this we recommend that point (vi) in the policy also refers to this e.g. '... respect their heritage setting in a positive manner <u>including views across the area</u>' .</p>	SAL.B1 Load Street Redevelopment Area	Amend text at point (vi) '... respect their heritage setting in a positive manner <i>including views across the area.</i> '	<p>SALMOD60</p> <p>Amend point (vi) as follows: "...respect their heritage setting in a positive manner <i>including views across the area.</i>"</p>	Agreed	Yes

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Appendix 2 - Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan

English Heritage's Representation	Paragraph / Policy	Director of Economic Prosperity and Place Response	Resulting Minor Amendment to the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan?	Response from English Heritage	Common Ground Established?
<p><u>KCAAPP21</u></p> <p>English Heritage welcomes and supports the strategic vision for retail development in the area in terms of the 'retail dumbbell' focused on Weavers Wharf and Bromsgrove Street. We believe that this could serve to support the vitality and viability and regeneration of the wider town centre area within the ring road.</p>	<p>Strategic Objectives p.18</p>	<p>Support is welcomed.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><u>KCAAPP22</u></p> <p>English Heritage supports the emphasis this policy and the supporting reason justification give to delivering quality design in the future regeneration and development of Kidderminster. We also welcome and support the commitment to preparing a Town Centre Design Framework.</p> <p>Whilst we broadly support the ambitions of the core design principles set out in the policy, we consider that the following amendments would serve to further strengthen their consistency with national guidance (e.g. National Planning Policy Framework, 58):</p>	<p>KCA.GPB1 Retail Development and KCA.UP1 Urban Design Key Principles</p>	<p>Comments are noted.</p>	<p>KCAPMOD20</p> <p>Amend criteria (i) "... enhances local character and distinctiveness..". Amend criteria (l) "...green infrastructure and heritage assets of the town centre....".</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point (i) add 'character' [so '...enhances local <i>character</i> and distinctiveness...']. • Point (L) include a reference to heritage assets, so '...green infrastructure and <i>heritage assets</i> of the town centre...']. 					
<p><u>KCAAPP23</u></p> <p>English Heritage welcomes and supports the prominence given to improving the public realm. This is a key component and influence on the quality of the townscape as well as contributing to the delivery of wider objectives associated with tourism, sustainable transport and economic vitality.</p>	KCA.UP2 Public Realm	Support is welcomed.	N/A	Agreed	Yes
<p><u>KCAAPP24</u></p> <p>English Heritage supports in principle the Plan's ambitions for the ring road. This is a bold and ambitious commitment, but as a key issue for the town we believe it fully warrants the positive and proactive strategy set out in the AAP.</p>	KCA.UP3 Ring Road Framework General Design Principles	Support is welcomed.	N/A	Agreed	Yes
<p><u>KCAAPP25</u></p> <p>English Heritage welcomes the specific consideration given to St. Mary's Church as part of this policy.</p>	KCAUP4 Ring Road Character Areas	Support is welcomed.	N/A	Agreed	Yes

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<p><u>KCAAPP26</u></p> <p>English Heritage agrees that the canal is a major asset for the town, as well as a heritage asset in its own right as a designated conservation area. As such we support the positive policy framework established by the plan in order to encourage and promote its sustainable use and full integration as part of the town centre in terms of active use and visual amenity.</p>	<p>KCA.UP5 Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal</p>	<p>Support is welcomed.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><u>KCAAPP27</u></p> <p>English Heritage supports in principle the ambitions for the area's historic environment and heritage assets as set out in the text. We acknowledge that the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document includes a detailed policy on the historic environment and that site specific heritage considerations are included within the plan provides a positive and proactive strategy for Kidderminster's historic environment and heritage assets.</p> <p>We consider, however, that it would be useful to strengthen and clarify the inter-relationships between this section and the policy framework on other topic areas, especially on urban and design and place-making and the public realm. The historic environment informs and can contribute to quality design, whilst the public realm can be an integral part of the setting of a</p>	<p>Heritage paragraphs 7.73-7.80</p>	<p>Comments are noted.</p>	<p>KCAPMOD22</p> <p>Add in additional sentence at end of para. 7.8 & 7.22 as follows: “It is also important to consider how any proposals will take account of and promote the surviving historic character of the townscape.”</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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<p>heritage asset and hence make a positive or indeed negative contribution to its significance. We also consider that it would be helpful to establish a clear link to the proposed Town Centre Design Framework and how this will take account of and promote the surviving historic character of the townscape, as for example described in the conservation area appraisals and any supporting management plans.</p>					

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Appendix 3 – Policy SAL.UP6 Including Proposed Amendments

SAL.UP1 – Safeguarding the Historic Environment

Relationship to the Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy recognises the importance of the historic environment in attracting visitors, residents and businesses to the District. The attractiveness of Bewdley as an historic market town is highlighted within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Safeguarding the Historic Environment

The importance of the historic environment and heritage is outlined in the Government's Statement on the Historic Environment which identifies that:

"The historic environment is an asset of enormous cultural, social, economic and environmental value. It makes a very real contribution to our quality of life and the quality of our places." (The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010)

The NPPF states that 'Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. (NPPF, paragraph 126) (SALMA13)

Wyre Forest District contains a variety of heritage assets, including buildings, conservation areas, monuments, historic landscapes and archaeology. (SALMOD34) These assets, **both designated and un-designated**, all combine to provide a sense of place and help to make the area unique. The continued preservation, maintenance and enhancement of existing assets as well as identification of additional features is seen as a key objective for the future development of the District. Given the importance of the historic environment, and its heritage assets, it is proposed that a specific policy is included within this document to help guide future decisions that may affect national and/or local heritage.

Safeguarding the Historic Environment

1. The Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

Any development proposal affecting the District's heritage assets, ~~or~~ **including** their setting, should demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. The District's heritage assets include:

- Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- **Buildings and structures included on the** Local Heritage List.
- Landscape features including ancient woodlands and veteran trees, field patterns, watercourses, and hedgerows of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- Archaeological remains and non-designated historic structures recorded on the County Historic Environment Record.
- Historic parks and gardens (~~both Registered and those not designated~~) (SALMOD34).

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Developments that relate to a Heritage Asset should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement. ~~Where proposals are likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, the Heritage Statement should demonstrate an understanding of such significance and in sufficient detail to assess any potential impacts. This should be informed by currently available evidence.~~

When considering a development proposal which may affect a Heritage Asset, or when preparing a Heritage Statement, applicants should have regard to the following points:

- i. To ensure that proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the significance of a Heritage Asset or its setting and to identify how proposals make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- ii. ~~Any harm or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification.~~
- iii. ~~The re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where this is consistent with the conservation of the specific heritage asset.~~
- iv. ~~Proposals which secure the long-term future of a heritage asset at risk will specifically be encouraged.~~
- v. In considering new development that may affect a heritage asset, proposals will need to identify how the scale, height and massing of new development in relation to the particular feature, and the materials and design utilised, does not detrimentally affect the asset or its setting.
- vi. That repairs, alterations, extensions and conversions of ~~statutorily and non-statutorily listed buildings~~ **heritage assets** takes into account the materials, styles and techniques to be used and the period in which the asset was built.
- vii. The installations of fixtures and fittings should not have a detrimental impact on **a heritage asset**, should be inconspicuously sited and proportioned and be designed sympathetically.

~~Proposals likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset or its setting should demonstrate an understanding of such significance. This should be informed by currently available evidence.~~

Development proposals that would have an adverse impact ~~or cause harm to~~ **on** a heritage asset and/or ~~their~~ its setting, **or which result in a reduction or loss of significance**, will not be permitted, unless it is clearly demonstrated the following criteria are met:

- a. There are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the need for development appropriate to the level of significance of the Heritage Asset.
- b. The reasons for the development outweigh the individual significance of the Heritage Asset, its importance as part of a group and to the local scene, and the need to safeguard the wider stock of such Heritage Assets.
- c. In the case of demolitions, that the substantial public benefits of the development outweigh the loss of the building or structure; or the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; or the loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use. Redevelopment proposals should provide ~~an design which provides an appropriate level of mitigation~~ **mitigates appropriately** against the loss of the Heritage Asset in proportion to its significance at national **or** local level ~~exceptional design to mitigate against the loss of the Heritage Asset.~~
(SALMOD36)

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Where material change to a heritage asset has been agreed, recording and interpretation should be undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, **artistic** or historic significance. The scope of the recording should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the impact of the development on the asset. The information and understanding gained should be made publicly available, as a minimum, through the relevant Historic Environment Record.

2. Conservation Areas

When development is proposed in, or adjacent to, a Conservation Area, proposals should accord with the existing (or draft) Conservation Area Character Appraisal **and seek to enhance or better reveal the significance of the area**. Development should not adversely affect views **within**, into or out of the Conservation Area.

Proposals for the demolition of a building or structure in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been clearly demonstrated that:

- i. It has no ~~recognised interest~~ **significance** in itself or by association, and no value to the ~~character~~ **significance** of the Conservation Area.
- ii. Its demolition or replacement would benefit the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- iii. Proposals include detailed and appropriate proposals for redevelopment, together with clear evidence redevelopment will proceed.

Proposals that affect shop fronts within a Conservation Area should have regard to the Council's Shop Front Design Guidance.

Reasoned Justification

Heritage assets are a non-renewable resource; once destroyed they can not be reinstated. They are a precious and finite asset and are powerful reminders of the work and life of earlier generations. The benefits of ~~preserving~~ **conserving** and enhancing heritage assets include:

- Providing the potential to be a form of sustainable development, by re-using existing structures and therefore reducing carbon emissions.
- Helping to influence the character of an area and give it a sense of place.
- Providing opportunities to be the catalyst for regeneration within an area and inspiring new development and imaginative design.

The retention and enhancement of the District's heritage assets are therefore fundamental aims of ensuring that the area retains and embraces its character so that it can be enjoyed by generations to come. The historic environment is also an important part of green infrastructure and a green infrastructure led approach to development could aid in the conservation of historic environment features, for example, by allowing archaeology to remain in situ or strategically placing green space to preserve the setting of a Listed Building or Scheduled Ancient Monument. Therefore this policy also has close links with SAL.UP3: Providing a Green Infrastructure Network.

Heritage Statements

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The scope and degree of detail necessary in a Heritage Statement will vary according to the particular circumstances of each application. A statement should summarise the heritage interest of the heritage asset (archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic) and its significance before considering the impact of proposals. A Heritage Statement does not replace the need for an archaeological desk-based assessment or archaeological field evaluation. Where the direct impact of the proposed development, its size, its proximity to, and/or the importance of the heritage asset(s) affected are considerable, it may be appropriate to require further detailed information to accompany an application. Factual inaccuracies within Heritage Statements may render them invalid.

The following is a guide to the sort of information that the Council may require for different types of application:

- For applications for **listed building consent**, a written statement that includes a schedule of works to the listed building(s), an analysis of the significance of the archaeology, history, **architecture** and character of the building/structure, the principles of and justification for the proposed works and their impact on the special character of the listed building or structure, its setting and the setting of adjacent listed buildings **or other associated heritage assets** may be required. A structural survey may be required in support of an application for listed building consent.
- For applications for **conservation area consent**, a written statement that includes a structural survey, an analysis of the character and appearance of the building/ structure within its setting and/or its significance within its setting, the principles of and justification for the proposed demolition and its impact on the special character of the area may be required.
- For applications affecting a Registered or Locally Listed Historic Park and/ or Garden, a written statement setting out the principles of and, justification for, the proposed works and their impact on the ~~special character~~ **significance** of the designed landscape or its setting will be required. The statement may need to include an historic landscape assessment, a site survey and analysis of the historic landscape, an archaeological assessment, a tree survey, an ecological survey and/ or a management plan.
- For applications either related to or impacting on the **setting of heritage assets**, (~~ie listed buildings and structures, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields and scheduled ancient monuments~~) a written statement of **how the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, and this significance should be provided.** ~~the special character of the historic asset, that includes.~~ Plans showing historic features that may exist on or adjacent to the application site may be required, along with an analysis of the significance of the archaeology, **architecture**, history and character of the **asset** ~~building/structure~~, the principles of and justification for the proposed works and their impact on **its significance and any associated assets.** ~~the special character of the listed building or structure, its setting and the setting of adjacent listed buildings.~~ In the case of Historic Parks and Gardens, **account will need to be taken of historic views and vistas** and an historic landscape assessment may be required.
- For applications **within or adjacent to a conservation area**, an assessment of the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area may be required.

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- For applications for demolition or alteration of a **building** identified on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record or on a Local Heritage List, where such a list exists, an analysis of the significance of the archaeology, **architecture**, history and character of the building/structure, the principles of and justification for the proposed works and their impact on the building or structure, its setting and the setting of adjacent **historic-heritage** assets may be required. A structural survey may also be required.
- For all applications involving the **disturbance of ground**, applicants are advised to check the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record to determine whether the scheme will affect known, or has the potential to affect previously unrecorded, heritage assets. Applicants may need to commission an assessment of existing archaeological information or an archaeological field evaluation and submit the results as part of the Heritage Statement.

Listed Buildings and Local Heritage List

There are in the region of 1,000 Statutory Listed Buildings and structures within the District, together with 17 Conservation Areas and 9 Scheduled Monuments. In addition there are approximately 900 buildings and structures currently on the Wyre Forest Local Heritage List. The Local Heritage List is being produced on a phased basis with surveys of the three main towns and the rural areas of Wolverley & Cookley and Blakedown all completed. It is envisaged that the list will continue to be updated in the remainder of the rural areas over the next few years.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". They recognise the importance of conserving the wider townscape and its setting, rather than just individual listed buildings and structures, or groups of such buildings.

There are currently seventeen Conservation Areas in the District, these are:

- Areley Kings (semi-rural location, edge of Stourport-on-Severn)
- Bewdley (Town Centre)
- Blakebrook (suburban Kidderminster)
- Broome (rural hamlet)
- Chaddesley Corbett (rural settlement)
- Churchill (rural hamlet)
- Church Street (Kidderminster Town Centre)
- Green Street (Kidderminster Town Centre)
- Harvington (rural hamlet)
- Ribbesford (rural hamlet)
- Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal
- Stourport-on-Severn No 1 (Canal Basin and Town Centre)
- Stourport-on-Severn No 2 (Town Centre)
- Gilgal (Stourport-on-Severn)
- Upper Arley (rural settlement)
- Vicar Street and Exchange Street (Kidderminster Town Centre)
- Wolverley (rural settlement)

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT SITE ALLOCATIONS AND POLICIES AND KIDDERMINSTER CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND – ENGLISH HERITAGE

~~Government guidance on the historic environment, places a presumption in favour of the preservation and enhancement of historic assets and features such as Conservation Areas.~~ Each of the designated Conservation Areas within the District has an associated Conservation Area Character Appraisal (except for Blakebrook and Areley Kings) and therefore new development, within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, will need to take full account of the detail contained within the appropriate Character Appraisal.

Carefully considered, high quality designs that provide a successful contrast with their surroundings can preserve and enhance character, as well as schemes that employ authentic historical forms and features. Careful treatment of the setting of a building is also vital to ensure that new development complements and enhances its surroundings.

Archaeological Sites

~~Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM's)~~ are sites and structures legally protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). They may be publicly or privately owned. The following sites are **Scheduled Monuments**:

- Arley Wood Camp (Upper Arley)
- Baches Forge (Churchill)
- Barrow Hill (Chaddesley Corbett)
- Bowercourt Farm moated site and ponds (Rock)
- Drakelow hill fort (Wolverley)
- Harvington Hall moated site, ponds and quarries (Chaddesley Corbett)
- Pickards Farm moated site (Upper Arley)
- Rock Farm moated site (Rock)
- Wassell Wood moated site (Kidderminster Foreign)

Archaeological remains provide crucial links to the past and can provide useful information about local heritage. Appropriate steps must be undertaken to identify and protect them as they are easily damaged or destroyed when development takes place. To protect the integrity of archaeological remains, preservation should take place in situ where appropriate, taking into account the established significance of the heritage asset. Where it is not possible to protect remains in situ reasonable and agreed mitigation measures will be required. Early consultation with the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record is essential for any sites that could potentially have archaeological interest. Not all archaeological remains will have been previously identified and sites may have archaeological potential.

Historic Landscapes

The local landscape is the product of complex historical processes and past land uses. Much of the value of the historic landscape lies in its complexity, diversity and local distinctiveness. Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service ~~have recently undertaken~~ **has completed** an Historic Landscape Characterisation of the County as part of English Heritage's national programme. This provides information on the surviving historic character of the landscape and landscape features of heritage significance. The Historic Landscape Characterisation provides a framework for informed landscape management strategies, spatial planning, development control and conservation issues. It will also allow future changes in the historic landscape to be monitored.

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The West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project was published in 2010. Historic farmsteads make a significant contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness. In Wyre Forest District, there is a very high level of residential use and conversion of such buildings. The ~~forthcoming~~ Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads Assessment Guidance Toolkit should be **used to inform proposals at the earliest stage to help understand the heritage potential and significance of a site and its capacity for change.** The Guidance will be a material consideration when assessing applications affecting historic farmsteads.

Sustainability

Consideration of development proposals will also need to take into account the objective of securing the long term existence of any particular asset. In this context, enabling development of a type or form not normally considered acceptable in a particular location (site or buildings), may be considered where it has been proven that all other alternatives have been explored, and the development or use proposed is the only practical means of securing the sympathetic retention of the feature.

When considering the demolition of an historic building or structure (whether statutorily listed or not) regard should be had to national planning guidance. In the case of proposals for demolition applicants should:

- Demonstrate all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses, find viable new uses for the building or structure, market it, or otherwise preserve it in charitable or community ownership.
- Prove that the building is wholly beyond repair.
- Consider proposals for relocation where physically feasible.
- Include detailed and appropriate proposals for redevelopment that would produce substantial benefits to the community together with clear evidence the redevelopment will proceed.
- Where appropriate, provide some level of recording of the heritage asset prior to demolition

When considering small-scale renewable energy installations, energy efficiency and adaptation, careful and appropriate consideration of the impact of such works on **the significance of** heritage assets will be required. Any such works must be in accordance with policies contained within the LDF.