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Understanding heritage significance in planning decisions in England: the current state of play

Abstract

This research focusses on the challenges contained within the urban planning system of England which is meant to aid historic environment decision-making for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) across the country. Alongside Historic England's value system there is a vast amount of guidance on how to properly understand the values to determine the significance of a heritage asset which extends from purely the aesthetic to looking at a holistic approach containing intangible and tangible values. There are also difficulties such as confusion over the mechanisms needed to present a holistic understanding of the historic environment. This research seeks to analyse the extent to which these forms of guidance along with policy documents are influencing understanding of the significance of heritage assets within England. In order to gain insight, a case study approach was adopted to examine five randomly selected heritage statements from five LPAs, resulting in 25 heritage significance statements. This approach enabled an initial understanding of some of the actors contributing to what was found to be an overall lack of quality, appreciation or comprehension of the influence significance and value have in planning decisions about the historic environment. This has implications in terms of how we educate built environment practitioners; the lack of professional recognition; the accessibility of information; and the underpinning of legislation when it comes to the historic environment.

Keywords

heritage value; significance; tangible heritage; intangible heritage; decision-making; urban planning

Introduction

In England, the heritage value-led approach to assessing the significance of heritage assets is acknowledged by the government's historic environment advisor, Historic England (HE), as the way of undertaking an assessment of significance for managing, maintaining, altering, conserving and decision-making in the built environment. The Statement of Significance is the vehicle for undertaking the assessment of heritage values to understand the tangible and intangible attributes of a heritage asset,¹ its fixtures and fittings, or its setting in order to understand the significance of components, as well as the building or site's capacity for change. The concept of significance is pivotal as it underpins decision-making for the historic environment and can result in both preservation and/or conservation, but also because of a lack of understanding, education or appreciation, the deliberate or unintended destruction of irreplaceable historic environments and cultural heritage.²

The beginnings of a value system for the historic environment

The development of the concept of heritage value stems from discussions of authenticity and preservation of monuments and artwork during the nineteenth century. Although not specifically referring to heritage value per-se, notable authors of this time such as John Ruskin spoke of the 'lamp of life' where architecture stems from the mind of man, and

¹ A heritage asset can take many forms, such as a building, a monument, a structure or land, amongst others. Under the planning system in England, heritage assets are grouped into the following categories: Listed Building; Conservation Area; Registered Battlefield; Registered Shipwreck; Scheduled Monument; Park and Garden; Non-Designated Heritage Asset; World Heritage Site.

² MHCLG, *National Planning Policy Framework* (London: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025).

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3 John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (first published 1840, reprinted London: Electric Book Company Ltd, 2001).

4 William Morris, *Manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* (London: Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 1877).

5 Morris, *Manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings*.

6 Alois Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus: Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1903).

7 Carolyn Ahmer, 'Riegl's "Modern Cult of Monuments" as a Theory Underpinning Practical Conservation and Restoration Work', *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 26, no. 2 (2020): 150–65.

8 Alexandra Harrer, 'The Legacy of Alois Riegl: Material Authenticity of the Monument in the Digital Age', *Built Heritage* 2017–06, 1, no. 2 (2017): 29–40.

9 ICOMOS, 'The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments', <https://www.icomos.org/en/167-the-athens-charter-for-the-restoration-of-historic-monuments> (accessed 4 April 2025).

10 ICOMOS, *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (Venice: ICOMOS, 1964).

11 It is not the purpose of this research to document the various heritage value systems that have been created, however one might find useful research on these in: Harald L. Fredheim and Manal Khalaf, 'The Significance of Values: Heritage Value Typologies Re-examined', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 22, no. 6 (2016): 466–81.

12 UNESCO, 'World Heritage Convention', <https://whc.unesco.org/en/committee/> (accessed 4 April 2025).

13 James P. Lesh, 'A Regional Conservation Manifesto, The Burra Charter and the Australian Re-invention of Urban Heritage Management, ca. 1975–1985', *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 12, no. 2 (2017): 120–33.

14 Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (Australia ICOMOS, 1979).

the 'lamp of memory' where architecture can preserve the inheritance of past ages.³ Additionally, William Morris,⁴ who was influenced by Ruskin's work, was amongst founding members of the Society of Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) who published a manifesto in 1877 calling for the adoption of a set of conservation principles that emphasised the importance and authenticity in historic fabric where modern tools, arts and craftsmanship cannot meddle without destroying.⁵ While these writings appear to be more linked to discourse around themes such as authenticity, nonetheless, they are very closely linked to ideas around how heritage is valued in terms of preservation, maintenance and restoration. One of the earliest mentions of the term 'heritage value' was by Alois Riegl which specified three heritage values—'Deliberate Commemorative Value', 'Historical Value' and 'Age Value'.⁶ Carolyn Ahmer⁷ and Alexandra Harrer⁸ see the influences of Riegl and the movement towards authenticity and valuing heritage as setting the foundations for international charters such as the Athens Charter,⁹ the Venice Charter¹⁰ and the formation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.¹¹ The principles developed from these international charters continue to frame debates about conservation and heritage management practices. The formation of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965 led member governments to explore how to best preserve their historic environment through meetings of the World Heritage Committee.¹²

However, member countries of ICOMOS had differing approaches to conserving heritage. James Lesh discusses the tension between Australian heritage practitioners who were discontent within these ICOMOS meetings with European (and British) heritage practitioners, whose approach to heritage dominated urban conservation.¹³ The uniqueness of Australian heritage required a different approach that challenged European philosophies around conservation. This led to the Australian ICOMOS group, led by the then Dr Miles Lewis and Dr James Semple-Kerr, publishing in 1979 *The Australia ICOMOS Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, which became known as the 'Burra Charter'.

The Burra Charter illustrated guidelines and principles for the management of places, rather than buildings or monuments that formed the European focus at the time. The Burra Charter utilised its own heritage values of 'Scientific', 'Aesthetic', 'Historic' and 'Social Values' for past, present and future generations to assist in explaining how to value and manage sites and significance.¹⁴ This differed from the prevailing Eurocentric philosophy as the Burra Charter sought to define intangible and cultural heritage such as storytelling, experience, involvement and awareness of context and culture. Intangible heritage was given equal weight to considerations around the more tangible and visual aspects of cultural heritage.

Whilst the Burra Charter did not provide guidance to the understanding of significance, this work was undertaken by Semple-Kerr who further developed the concept of cultural heritage management and managing sites through change.¹⁵ These contributions remain as some of the most influential publications in changing the way heritage philosophy has been undertaken across the ICOMOS member countries' considerations around intangible heritage.

Today's way of valuing the historic environment in the western world comes from these developments in charters and policy which have primarily derived from experts from professional and academic backgrounds. We still inherit these opinions by experts as one of the main driving forces in determining what is valuable when considering heritage assets both in the UK and around the world.

In England, the creation of the National Heritage Act 1980 altered the way that heritage assets were managed and protected, and established

the National Heritage Memorial Fund that could provide grants for the restoration of historic buildings. The subsequent National Heritage Act 1983 established the Historic Buildings and Monument Commission, later English Heritage and now, since 2015, HE, the government's statutory advisor for the management of the nation's historic environment. As part of the process of grant funding, applicants were required to demonstrate their understanding of the significance of the heritage asset through submission of a Conservation Management Plan that incorporated both tangible and intangible values, and to develop a management plan inspired by guidance, such as Semple-Kerr's.

The application and use of heritage value systems in England

Erica Avrami and Randall Mason view heritage values as 'the different qualities, characteristics, meanings, perceptions, or associations ascribed to the things we wish to conserve'.¹⁶ Additionally, Harald Fredheim and Manal Khalaf define values as the 'identification, sustaining and enhancing of significance where significance is understood as the overall value of heritage, or the sum of its constituent "heritage values"'.¹⁷ In today's system of historic environment decision-making and management, value systems are a commonly used term within heritage circles which Laurajane Smith refers to as the 'global common sense',¹⁸ where over the past century predominantly western countries under the ICOMOS banner have come together in attempts to agree on principles or values on how to manage, conserve and care for historic sites.

As a member of ICOMOS, the UK, like other countries, has implemented their own version of a heritage value system within planning involving considerations of applications for alterations within the historic environment. Within the UK, decision-making for the purposes of planning is divided into Acts of Parliament where there are similar but different planning legislation and policies governing the devolved nations. This research is focussed on England's planning system where decision-making for the historic environment is commonly governed by the two most used Acts, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCA).¹⁹

An interesting observation about the law is that the need to understand heritage value has never been incorporated into it, but has always formed part of guidance that is a material consideration for decisions. Neither of the Acts mention the terms 'heritage value' or 'authenticity'. The closest the legislation comes is the PLBCA which states that a decision maker 'shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.²⁰

Where buildings are considered to be of national importance, an assessment of their architectural and historic interest is undertaken by HE to designate whether it is of national importance; a 'listing'. In these cases, additional listed building consent may be required in order to protect this special interest. In order for a heritage asset to become listed under the PLBCA, it is assessed by HE in accordance with principles such as age, rarity, selectivity and national interest, amongst others.²¹ Confusingly, whilst buildings are listed for their national architectural and historic interest, the decision-making and management of the historic environment revolves around considering any potential harm to the significance of a heritage asset, where significance comprises the sum of relevant tangible and intangible heritage values. Whilst significance and national importance have similarities, they are in fact different, with the former linked to the management, conservation and preservation process and the latter to the listing process.

¹⁵ James Semple-Kerr, *The Conservation Plan* (Sydney: The National Trust of Australia, 1982).

¹⁶ Erica Avrami and Randall Mason, 'Mapping the Issues of Values', in *Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions*, ed. Susan Macdonald et al. (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2019).

¹⁷ Fredheim and Khalaf, 'The Significance of Values'.

¹⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 21.

¹⁹ There are other Acts of Parliament that can be involved in planning decision-making for historic environments in England such as, for example, the Scheduled Monuments Act 1979 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, amongst others.

²⁰ The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, United Kingdom, Sections 16 and 66, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/> (accessed 31 March 2025).

²¹ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings* (London: Department of Digital, Media, Culture and Sport, 2018).

22 English Heritage (now Historic England), *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2008).

Whilst initially beginning its life as an internal document for staff use, in 2008 English Heritage (EH), now HE, published their *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*.²² The document was aimed at providing guidance to assist planning decision-making. According to HE, to understand the significance of heritage assets, one must be able to understand both their tangible and intangible consisting of the following four main values:

- Historic Value: derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative;
- Evidential Value: derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
- Aesthetic Value: derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
- Communal Value: derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory;
- and other values such as archaeological, spiritual, cultural and artistic, amongst others.

The values whilst defined, appear to be deliberately broad in order to attempt to catch all facets of values which might be important to consider in understanding the significance of a heritage asset. This methodology of assessing significance through the HE value system is one of the most common and acknowledged ways of defining the significance of a heritage asset in planning in England.

However, for completeness—and to add further confusion—there is a variance in the heritage values introduced by the UK Government's original National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 (and in subsequent amendments) that runs parallel to these HE values. Since its inception the NPPF has defined the significance of heritage assets as being made up of heritage values, however instead of adopting the same values as HE, the NPPF defines heritage values as archaeological, architectural, artistic and historical.²³ This means that in making historic environment determinations, this variance has created confusion between which value system to apply in planning decision-making. While the preference given to either value system has never been tested in a court of law, both sets of values are considered to be material considerations in the determination of a planning application.

Historic England attempted to resolve this issue in a review of their 2008 document which was published for consultation in 2017.²⁴ This document attempted to repurpose the 2008 heritage value system so that it aligned with the NPPF heritage values, however it was never officially adopted. Both systems, despite their differences in terminology, set out the context in England for what is meant by heritage values for the purpose of the assessment of significance in planning in England involving development or works to the historic environment.

While it is still the case that one needs to be an expert to interpret, analyse and give recommendations for an item's conservation, maintenance, management and use, values are often subjectively applied and depend on how they are understood, valued, explained and interpreted. Furthermore, the evolution of values since the Burra Charter now incorporates notions of societal values and looks beyond only the physical nature of things. Heritage values are also impacted by external factors such as economic development, political influence, social justice and civil rights issues, changing governance, digitisation and environmental degradation,

23 MHCLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 75.

24 Historic England, *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment Consultation Draft 10th November 2017* (Swindon: Historic England, 2017).

amongst others.²⁵ These changes in values also foreground discussion of who has the authority to make decisions about heritage and how do communities and society value heritage?

The requirement to take into account heritage values for decision-making in the historic environment comes from the NPPF, Paragraph 207, which states that 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'.²⁶ This requirement then filters down into the assessment of local policies in an LPA's Development or Neighbourhood Plan.

The description of significance is presented in a document typically called a Heritage Statement or a Statement of Significance. The importance of the Statement of Significance in a planning application is necessary because it brings together 'all the reasons why a building or place should be preserved, why it is meaningful or useful, and what aspects require the most protection'.²⁷ The Statement of Significance is a critical knowledge gathering exercise that not only seeks to meet the requirements of the NPPF and local policy in decision-making, but to support planning policy, decisions about design, preservation, conservation, maintenance, tourism and how society interacts with the historic environment, and secures this appreciation for future generations.

Given that the value system is utilised by all sections of the community in England to help them lodge planning applications, it needs to be understood by non-experts with little or no heritage background. For example, HE's Aesthetic Value is arguably one of the more common values that a member of the public can identify with as the value is predominantly derived from the beauty of the physical object in front of them, for example its physical appearance. However, whilst some superficial knowledge by an inexperienced member of the public might be able to identify a building that is in their mind beautiful, there is still the need to understand why that particular building can be considered as aesthetically pleasing or significant. For example, Brutalist buildings are seen as beautiful to some and ugly to others. Consequently, can a member of the public identify how a building provides 'sensory and intellectual stimulation', and to what extent this is valuable? Additionally, elements such as a heritage asset's contribution to art, poetry, storytelling or contribution to tourism might have elements of EH's Historic, Communal and Evidential values that may go unnoticed.²⁸

When lodging a planning application involving a heritage asset, in addition to requiring plans, the application form and fee, LPA's will also require a heritage statement to be submitted which is supported by Paragraph 207 of the NPPF. Whilst a heritage statement is not specifically mentioned in legislation, it is covered under the UK's Town and Country Planning (Development Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DPO), where Section 7 seeks that in order for a planning application to be valid, it should include 'any other plans, drawings and information necessary to describe the development which is the subject of the application'.²⁹ It is important to note that while a heritage statement is sought to be submitted in applications that involve a heritage asset, it is not a measure of its quality or relevance. Validation is only dependent upon a document called a heritage statement being submitted as part of an application. Consequently, not submitting a heritage statement would not technically contravene the DPO and an LPA may still determine an application without a heritage statement.

The contents of a properly considered heritage statement are required to be proportionate to the application being considered; the more complicated the application, the more complicated the heritage statement may

²⁵ Avrami and Mason, 'Mapping the Issues of Values'.

²⁶ MHCLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 60.

²⁷ Randall Mason, 'Fixing Historic Preservation: A Constructive Critique of "Significance"', *Places* 16, no. 1 (2004): 64–71.

²⁸ English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*.

²⁹ Town and Country Planning (Development Procedure) (England) Order 2015, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents> (accessed 30 March 2025).

30 Cf. English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*; Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Swindon: Historic England, 2019).

31 English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*; Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance*.

be. However, the statement should be no more than to explain the significance of the heritage asset, the surrounding heritage context or its setting. According to HE's guidance, at the very least a heritage statement should contain an analysis of both the tangible and intangible elements which make up the value of the heritage asset, including any elements which may contribute to its setting.³⁰ The process of understanding the significance in terms of values of a heritage asset needs to be at the very centre of any planning proposal that would affect a heritage asset. Ideally and, as per HE's guidance, this significance assessment is undertaken at the very beginning of the proposal and needs to be able to illustrate how an understanding of significance has influenced the proposal and seeks to do the minimal amount of harm (if any) as possible.³¹ In compiling the heritage statement, applicants will also include photographs, map regression, research from the Historic Environment Record as well as any listed building description to assist in demonstrating a holistic significance assessment from which to commence an analysis of any potential harm that might result from the proposed works.

To further add to the confusion already raised in this research, it is worth noting the purpose and function of listings, or 'list descriptions' as they are commonly known. Listed buildings and structures in England are categorised as being Grade II, Grade II* or Grade I and these designations relate to the entire inside and outside of a structure, not just a façade or what can be seen from some particular vantage point. Every listed building has a list description which is a legal requirement so that it can be recognised as a building of national importance in the PLBCA.

Between 1949 until around 2005, the purpose of the list description was to describe the physical appearance of the building rather than what is significant. They did not delve into issues such as the setting or curtilage. For the purposes of this article, this type of list description will be called an 'old listing'. From 2005 to the present day, when devising a new or reviewing an old listing, HE publish a list description that explains the values which made the heritage asset of enough architectural or historic interest to be listed—called a 'new listing' herein. A new listing explains why the listing is of architectural and/or historical interest, as well as detailing the associated curtilage including buildings that are important to the setting. However, it is important to note that national architectural and historical interest, and significance, whilst similar, are not the same. Furthermore, a new listing will not provide a comprehensive explanation of architectural and historic interest as the significance and value of an asset is not fixed and changes over time.

Given these factors and how they impact how significance is interpreted in planning decision-making in England, the research presented here seeks to understand the current state of play with regards to how significance is understood within planning applications. In the next section an analysis of some of the heritage statements submitted for assessment to five LPAs across England is presented.

Method

To attempt to understand the current state of play, a case study approach was chosen as a method for analysis as it has the ability to take a snapshot and 'close in on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice'.³² Understanding and planning for the historic environment cannot be derived from experiments under controlled conditions in accordance with any normative nor phronetic agenda.³³ To understand how processes operate within an urban environment, the city is the planner's laboratory. It is the site where more valuable

32 Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Five Misunderstandings about Case Study Research', *Qualitative Inquiry* 2, no. 12 (2006): 219–45.

33 Cf. Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Phronetic Planning Research: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections', *Planning*

learnings can be gained from the empirical and practical experiences exhibited through an analysis of extant case studies.³⁴

In order to get a feeling of the state of play in LPAs, data in the form of publicly available heritage statements that accompanied applications for listed building consent were analysed. There are a number of different types of heritage assets so identifying listed building consents increased the probability that a heritage statement would be submitted.

On any LPA website there is the ability to undertake an advanced search of decided planning applications including 'listed building application' and results were selected over a year period from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024. Five random applications were selected from the results from each LPA. On clicking into the applications and accessing the submission documents, each heritage statement was found as either a downloadable document or as part of the planning statement.

Five applications were selected from five LPAs in England: Swindon Borough Council (South West);³⁵ Richmond upon Thames (London);³⁶ Coventry City Council (Midlands);³⁷ Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Council (East of England);³⁸ and Northumberland (North East),³⁹ as shown in Table 1. The selection of councils over a wide geographic region across England is to get a feeling of the state of play from the results, rather than to achieve a particular sample size representative of a population.

The research method is a qualitative form of analysis in the form of a narrative that seeks to learn and explore how things are understood rather than a purely quantitative approach that compares and analyses data to reveal trends.

Table 1 shows the results from the councils assessed and indicates the profession of the assessment author, the heritage values discussed, the guidance and/or policies referred to, and whether the setting was discussed in relation to HE's guidance on understanding the heritage value.⁴⁰

Given the NPPF seeks to understand not just the heritage asset itself but also any contribution made by the asset's setting, it is important to understand whether there is an appreciation of 'setting' within the heritage statement. The 'Heritage value' column of Table 1 describes what kind of assessment has been undertaken, and the values mentioned. It is not the purpose of this research to detail whether the assessment of values is holistic or in accordance with HE's guidance, nor that a true or accurate reflection has been given. The results only present an assessment of which specific values are mentioned, analysed and discussed.

Designating the 'author's occupation' is useful to understand any linkage between their understanding of heritage values and significance. It also enables whether ascertaining significance is a technical exercise understood by only those that are appropriately qualified. Linked to this discussion is whether the profession creates a better ability to produce an understanding of the appropriate value systems because their professional association requires a particular level of competence from its members. The recognised association for built heritage practitioners is the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) where to be a full member of the institute, members would be expected to have a competent level of knowledge and understanding of significance. It is also useful to understand how authors that represent other professional bodies in the built environment perform, for example those who are members of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) and Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIFA), amongst others.

The 'application type' is useful for understanding whether there is an influence of scale of the development where the increased size, complication and potentially increased cost of a development is associated with

Theory and Practice 5, no. 3 (2004): 283–306.

³⁴ See, for example, Eugénie Birch, 'Cities, People and Processes as Planning Case Studies', in *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning*, ed. Randall Crane and Rachel Weber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁵ Swindon Borough Council, 'Planning—Simple Search', <https://pa.swindon.gov.uk/publicaccess/> (accessed 10 May 2024).

³⁶ London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, 'Planning Search', https://www2.richmond.gov.uk/lbrplanning/Planning_search.aspx (accessed 10 May 2024).

³⁷ Coventry City Council, 'Coventry Online Planning Register', <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/planning-development/coventry-online-planning-register> (accessed 10 May 2024).

³⁸ Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, 'Planning-Simple Search', <https://online.west-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple#> (accessed 10 May 2024).

³⁹ Northumberland Council, 'Planning Simple Search', <https://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple#> (accessed 10 May 2024).

⁴⁰ English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*; Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance*.

a more detailed and thorough assessment of significance and whether scale is linked to the contracting of advice from a heritage practitioner.

The 'guidance/policy referred to' column relates to the source material which has informed the heritage statement. A robust heritage statement will have developed a significance assessment based on guidance around heritage values either from the NPPF or HE or other bodies that publish heritage guidance, including IHBC. The assessment of policy and guidance enables an analysis of the influence that these have had on the heritage statement and evidence whether the author has consulted them in developing the heritage statement. The comments column in [Table 1](#) gives further detail and the author's opinion of the heritage statement.

This initial research purposely selects a small sample size in order to establish learning that can be gained from this and develop a foundation for further research as specified in the Further Research section to the end of this article.

It should also be acknowledged that the author has an 'insider perspective' towards this research,⁴¹ having been involved with planning and listed building applications for over 20 years and being a chartered urban planner and heritage practitioner. Arguably an insider perspective is advantageous as it enables the author to understand the qualities of a heritage statement, the values and the elements that are required in order to generate robust data and give qualitative meaning to the results. It additionally enables the author to be in a position to understand and make sense of the complexities involved in writing heritage statements and the inherent procedures and methodologies involved.

41 Nikki Hayfield and Caroline Huxley, 'Insider and Outsider Perspectives: Reflections on Researcher Identities in Research with Lesbian and Bisexual Women', *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 12, no. 2 (2015): 91–106.

Analysis

The commonality in the 25 listed building consent applications analysed in [Table 1](#) is that they have the same context; they are all part of listed building consent applications that have been registered by an LPA and aim to meet local validation requirements, the DPO and paragraph 207 of the NPPF.

It was interesting to note that the scale of the development in this sample did not appear to influence whether a heritage practitioner was recruited as otherwise might be assumed given that the more difficult or complicated the application, the greater the need for expert advice. This was not shown to be the case, with smaller and less complex schemes such as conservatories and small extensions (for example 23-04390-lbc in [Table 1](#)) having employed a historic building practitioner as did larger and more complicated schemes like a pedestrian footbridge (23-2582-lbc).

Given that the acceptance by a LPA of a heritage statement for validation purposes is not a determinant as to its quality, the majority of the heritage statements in [Table 1](#) contain no analysis of heritage values, significance or the contribution made by their setting. The most common component of the heritage statement across the examples was the list description which the author used to describe significance but with no further information. This would highlight that there is a misunderstanding of the purpose of a list description as described previously. In all of the cases, these listings were 'old listings' which described the heritage asset for nothing more than the purpose of identifying it.

When heritage values were mentioned, these were a combination of the NPPF values and the HE values with most being the latter. In one example (23-01945-LB) it was noticed that King's Lynn and West Norfolk LPA has a specific heritage statement template for applicants to use for their listed building application. The template asks the user to provide a short history and what is significant about the building. The template then asks the user to follow a link to HE's planning advice page which has multiple

links to topics from design, local plans, housing and sustainable growth, amongst others. It is no coincidence that the response from this user to the significance question was that in their opinion the window in question was not significant because there is no reference to the window in the 'old listing', highlighting some of the confusion around the 'old listings' and 'new listings' previously discussed.

The discussion within this particular heritage statement revolved around the age of the window, which was taken as a determinant to its significance and that it was not original; was not in view from a public road; and was much thicker than other windows and was therefore not in-keeping. In this case it appeared that the author was a private homeowner and had a limited knowledge, qualifications, experience or awareness of either heritage values or significance. Significance was seen to be a purely aesthetic value, with key considerations around the look of the window and its age and perhaps concerning, that the window was not viewable by the public.

The remainder of the heritage statements in [Table 1](#) were completed by professions such as historic building practitioners, architects, architectural technicians, designers, tradespeople/installers and engineers. There was no set format to their reports, although the reports undertaken by historic building practitioners were significantly longer than the other professions and contained information such as map regression, historic summaries and then specific discussion of the significance in terms of the heritage value of the asset. The understanding of significance in the form of its heritage value then was able to inform discussion around impact and harm caused by the proposed works. Historic building practitioners tended to favour discussion of HE's value system with only two of the historic building practitioners utilising the NPPF heritage values.

Architects and architectural technicians were the most prolific occupations involved with writing heritage statements in this sample and consistently included the list description with the heritage statements stopping there, although a small number included a map regression. Much of these statements were dedicated to explaining the reasoning behind the proposal, the design intention and the impact that the author believed would occur. There was no discussion of heritage values or setting and it was not evident that the proposed development itself or the assessment of any harm or impact was influenced by a consideration of the extant structure's significance or heritage values. It felt that the heritage considerations were derived as an afterthought or 'tick-box' exercise for validation with the emphasis placed on what their client wanted first.

There was one instance from Richmond-upon-Thames (23-2097-LBC) where the setting was briefly discussed. However, this was superficial given the lack of discussion around the heritage values which enabled an appreciation of the contribution made by the setting. Any analysis of setting was infrequent in all the statements from the sampling and may have been linked to the type of application itself where, for example, an application from Coventry (PL-2023-0002364-lbc) contained internal works which the author may have felt were of a minor nature (e.g. renovation of a kitchen) and would not affect the setting so there was no need to go into detail in that respect.

There were also heritage statements written by tradespeople who may have been contracted by an owner to install new windows and doors (e.g. 23-02232-LB), but these also failed to mention values or setting. It appeared that the main focus of these reports was to discuss what they wanted changed, rather than how the building's significance affected the proposed works or how they had taken significance into account when designing their scheme. Statements by tradespeople appeared to be

⁴² Historic England, *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2nd edn (Swindon: Historic England, 2017).

⁴³ English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*.

⁴⁴ Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance*.

⁴⁵ MHCLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*.

⁴⁶ Department of the Environment & Department of Natural Heritage, *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (London: DoE & DoNH, 1994).

copy and paste templates which were not bespoke to the building and were populated with generic statements that works were minor and as a result there was no harm.

Table 1 also shows that there was a correlation between referring to relevant guidance and policy as there was to referring to heritage values. In the same vein, those who referred to relevant guidance were historic building practitioners who discussed HE's Setting Guidance,⁴² HE's Conservation Principles,⁴³ HE's Assessing Significance Guidance⁴⁴ and the NPPF.⁴⁵ In one case (PL-2023-0001610-lbc) an interior designer referred to HE's Conservation Principles and other guidance designed to assist with listing buildings, but failed to apply any of this guidance to the scheme being promoted.

In summary these applications as presented in Table 1 illustrated the following:

- a number of the heritage statements submitted did not contain discussion of heritage values or setting and the HE guidance around heritage statements was rarely cited;
- when heritage values and setting were discussed appropriately, this was undertaken by professionals labelling themselves as historic building practitioners;
- those without heritage qualifications or chartership with the IHBC did not explain the significance of heritage assets in accordance with the values contained in relevant guidance;
- list descriptions were frequently submitted as part of the heritage statement without an understanding of their purpose;
- the visual aspects of a heritage asset were most frequently discussed with very little coverage of intangible aspects of significance;
- there was confusion regarding what to refer to in order to develop a heritage statement either because of insufficient direction and/or excessive web links available; and
- it was not evident that heritage significance influenced the development or works proposed.

Discussion

1 A question of guidance for understanding significance?

The guidance involving the assessment of significance from heritage values in England has been around since 2008, and was refreshed in 2019. The need for such an assessment was first published in the NPPF initially in 2012 and in all subsequent iterations, as well as earlier publications such as Planning Policy Guidance and Statements,⁴⁶ which contained similar requirements in utilising values to understanding significance.

As there are no restrictions on the quality of a heritage statement nor who can write them in order to be validated, Table 1 showed that there were more heritage statements made without any consultation of the relevant guidance than those that did. Given that the guidance has been around for many years and remains largely unchanged, it would not be unreasonable to form the opinion that professions such as architects and architectural technicians should be well aware and well versed in the guidance given their technical capabilities when it comes to building design and construction. The majority of the heritage statements written by architects and architectural technicians in these examples did appear to be predominantly focussed upon the design methodology of the proposed works, with there being little evidence that the heritage significance of the asset actually informing the proposed development or works. This was demonstrated by the lack of reference to relevant guidance as mentioned.

Given the plethora of guidance it is difficult to understand why the heritage statements in Table 1 are of such poor quality with no reference to this guidance nor discussion of heritage values. Part of the reason may be that the quality of a heritage statement does not relate to whether the statement would be accepted by the LPA to validate a planning application. There is also the matter of the amount of confusion at present with regards to the amount of guidance, as in the example from Kings Lynn and West Norfolk above which asked the author to click on an HE website with over 20 links. In this case the use of a template did not encourage any further discussion on heritage value, significance or setting. While the owner showed some appreciation of the aesthetic value of the window, had the statement template explored or asked the author to answer questions relating to other values such as historic, evidential or communal, there may have been further reasons given as to why this window was different. Perhaps the building had previously had a variance of windows developed in response to the changing fashions over time (evidential, historic)? Whilst the window to be replaced was modern, did it replicate a historic form which it replaced (historic, aesthetic)? Such questions are essential to understanding the holistic approach. Perhaps the large amount of guidance is the issue in that it is too difficult to navigate? If such guidance was offered as a one-stop, easy to use template or toolkit, then this may produce better quality assessments with a more developed understanding of significance.

2 A question of the legal status of a historic building practitioner and the heritage statement?

This next discussion revolves around whether the significance of a heritage asset is best understood by those considered to be experts or members of the public given that planning systems need to be accessible to everyone, whatever their capabilities. Currently a historic building practitioner does not appear to be seen in the same way that a chartered architect or an ecologist is, even though historic building practitioners equally require specific skill sets and competencies to perform. A potential solution could be to upgrade the specific status of heritage statements in a legal sense as part of the DPO2015 in a similar way that plans are requested as part of it. This would also be relevant for other reports such as around ecology, flood risk and so forth, such that where applications require professional reports these need to be undertaken by chartered professionals.

Linked to this is an interesting finding from the samples analysed that out of four 'Historic Building Practitioners' only one was a member of the acknowledged professional institute, the IHBC. In this respect these historic building practitioners self-identified as this title, even though they were not officially affiliated as an IHBC member. A historic building practitioner is not a protected title like a chartered member of Royal Institute of British Architects can call themselves an architect or where a chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute can call themselves a chartered town planner. This highlights a deeper issue as to the role and recognition of the professional association, the IHBC.

The IHBC do appear to be acknowledging this need with recent moves towards petitioning for chartership.⁴⁷ Such a change could encourage more heritage practitioners to become recognised members of the institute which could increase knowledge, awareness and use of chartered professionals in order to give advice on the historic environment. It would also likely encourage a level of competency

⁴⁷ IHBC, 'Petition for Charter', <https://petitionforcharter.ihbc.org.uk/> (accessed 4 April 2025).

for a professional to call themselves a historic building practitioner. As part of this, understanding why the public or other built environment professionals do not engage historic building practitioners for advice would be worth exploring further.

In Table 1 there was no real linkage or explanation provided as to the motivations of clients in engaging or not engaging a qualified historic building practitioner with the scale and complexity of the project, as noted above, having no discernible impact.

3 A question of occupation or who is the best to write heritage statements?

Table 1 illustrates how the historic building practitioners were the most consistent in applying heritage values and understanding significance. This can be attributed to the fact that because of their professional education they are qualified to make such determinations and understand the components that make up the significance of a designated heritage asset.

In contrast, the majority of heritage statements written by architects and architectural technicians did not refer to the guidance or discuss heritage values and included the 'old listing' as evidence for what the asset's significance is. This perhaps illustrates the confusion around 'old' and 'new' listings and in response HE clarified the purpose of list descriptions on their website.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, this advice does not appear to have been reviewed or understood in the heritage statements analysed in this study.

Furthermore, for building owners, an unfamiliarity with the language and system is arguably at play and a template designed to enable understanding of significance for the public would be a positive step forward.

Conclusion

Whilst heritage assets may be under private or public ownership, the community are custodians of these assets for the next generation. How listed buildings are cared for, maintained or conserved is therefore crucial and needs to be undertaken with a robust understanding of the heritage values which underpin the significance of a heritage asset. Table 1 shows that in this small sample of listed building applications that significance of a heritage asset is not being properly understood nor communicated. While the sampling presented in Table 1 is small it is indicative given that similar results and narratives are relevant to each of the five LPAs that were surveyed. It would be very worthwhile to extend this survey across England to see whether these results are mirrored across the country.

One observation that was common throughout the research was that the concept of submitting a heritage statement was seen as something that must be done and in the majority of cases some form of a statement was submitted. This illustrates that while applicants are aware of what they should do in order to submit an application, this research shows there needs to be robust and clear guidance around making a heritage statement so applicants understand how heritage values and significance need accounting for in any justification for alterations requiring an application for consent.

The study also raises the issue around legislation where the quality or coverage of heritage values is not part of validation requirements. If the DPO dictated that a heritage statement must contain an assessment of heritage values and setting, and that an LPA could not validate an application unless this was submitted, this might change the quality of the heritage statement and the understanding of how significance needs to be properly assessed for a heritage asset.

⁴⁸ Historic England, 'Understanding List Entries', <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries> (accessed 4 April 2025).

Finally, this research has focussed on England but it should not be assumed that its results are only relevant to the planning system in England. Given that there is a broad agreement between members of ICOMOS as to the principles involved in caring for the historic environment, there is arguably a need to audit current planning systems and understand whether heritage value systems could be made easier to use and understand at a regional or global level given that the philosophy and many aspects in historic environment conservation across nations are similar.

Further research

This initial research highlights a wealth of potential further research, including:

- expanding this initial survey across England to the point of data saturation in order to understand whether there are trends and narratives similar to this study and whether these can be explained;
- whether other countries are experiencing similar issues and whether there are any lessons that can be learnt as a result;
- conduct interviews and surveys with built environment professionals to understand the current issues involved in understanding and describing significance;
- research examining how the understanding of significance by built environment professionals can be improved through different forms of pedagogy, including feedback by students to improve teaching;
- given the complexities of interpreting and understanding the various guidance available, it is critical to test ways of enabling better understanding of significance for all levels of knowledge, such as through the use of an easy-to-use significance toolkit;
- finally, it would be worth understanding how and when historic building practitioners are engaged in providing advice for alterations to the historic environment and whether there are any barriers to understanding the importance of proper qualified advice which may be linked to better recognition of the profession itself.

Table 1 Assessment of heritage statements submitted to five local planning authorities.

Application no	Heritage statement; Author's profession/ professional body (if indicated)	Description of works	Heritage values discussed (e.g. Historic, Evidential, Aesthetic, Communal, Spiritual, Archaeological etc.)	Setting discussed	Guidance/ Policy referred to
Coventry City Council					
PL-2023-0000178-lbc	Historic building; Consultant/ None	Conversion to residential flats	Evidential (archaeological), Historic, Aesthetic, Communal values discussed	Yes	Conservation area appraisal, NPPF, PLBCA, Local Plan, British Standard, HE setting guidance; HE 2008 guidance
PL-2023-0001610-lbc	Interior designer/ None	Removal entrance porch, new timber framed structure	Whilst the heritage values are defined (copy of NPPF and guidance) they are not assessed. Only 'old style' list description is included	No	NPPF, HE2008, DDCM2018
PL-2023-0002364-lbc	Architect/ RIBA	Revision to kitchen	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None

(Table continued)

Table 1 Continued.

Application no	Heritage statement; Author's profession/ professional body (if indicated)	Description of works	Heritage values discussed (e.g. Historic, Evidential, Aesthetic, Communal, Spiritual, Archaeological etc.)	Setting discussed	Guidance/ Policy referred to
PL-2023-0002589-lbc	Historic building; Consultant/ None	Changes to external cladding	Whilst not categorised into the heritage values, it is evident that the values are discussed	Yes	NPPF
PL/2023/0000885/LBC	Architect/ RIBA	New shop frontage	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk					
23-01876-lb	Architect/ RIBA	Alterations to roof pitches	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
23-01945-LB	Home owner/ None	Replacement window	Utilises the council's heritage statement template, however no mention of heritage values	No	None
23-02194-LB	Architectural Technician/ CIAT	Solar panels	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
23-02232-LB	Engineer/ CEng	Replacement windows and doors, internal alterations	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
23-02292-lb	Architectural Technician/ None	Extensions and alterations	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
Northumberland Council					
23-04271-lbc	Architect/ RIBA	Installation of a flue	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
23-04390-lbc	Historic building; Consultant/ None	Replacement conservatory	Archaeological, Historic, Architectural, Historic interest are discussed	Yes	NPPF, Local Plan, HE2008, HE2015; HE 2016, HE2017
24-00014-lbc	Architect/ RIBA	Insertion of window	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
24-00412-lbc	Windows and door installer/ None	Renovation of existing windows	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
24-04486-lbc	Home improvement company/ None	Renovation of existing windows	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	None
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames					
23-2097-LBC	Architect/ RIBA	Single storey outbuilding and modification of wall	Some map regression, mentioning of setting, mention of the term 'heritage value' which is given low, but unclear how this has been derived given no discussion on the individual values. Conservation area mentioned	Yes	Conservation area appraisal
23-2452-lbc	Historic building; Consultant/ CIFA	Alterations to rear bathroom	Aesthetic, historic, illustrative and associative values discussed	Yes	PLBCA, NPPF, CIA2014, HE2008, HE2015, HE2018

(Table continued)

Table 1 Continued.

Application no	Heritage statement; Author's profession/ professional body (if indicated)	Description of works	Heritage values discussed (e.g. Historic, Evidential, Aesthetic, Communal, Spiritual, Archaeological etc.)	Setting discussed	Guidance/ Policy referred to
23-2582-lbc	Historic building; Consultant/ None	Alterations to footbridge	Aesthetic value, historic value, communal value discussed. Surrounding assets also assessed	Yes	LondoN Plan, Local Plan, NPPF, HE2017, HE2019, Local Plan, NPPF, NPPG
24-0320-lbc	Historic building; Consultant/ IHBC	Rear extension	Aesthetic value, historic value, communal value discussed. Surrounding assets also assessed	Yes	NPPF, NPPG, HE2017, HE2008
24/0371/LBC	N/a	Render of brick wall	No heritage statement submitted	No	None
Swindon Borough Council					
s-lbc-23-0693	Retail designers/ None	Changing places facility	No heritage values discussed	No	None
S-lbc-23-0796	Building owner/ None	Replacement timber windows	No heritage values discussed	No	None
s-lbc-23-1046	Historic building; Consultant/ IHBC, RTPI	Internal/external alterations	Archaeological, Architectural, Artistic and Historic interest discussed	No	NPPF, HE2019
s-lbc-23-1148	Architect/ RIBA	Replacement stone tiles with slate	No heritage values discussed, mentions surrounding buildings but no assessment of setting	No	None
s-lbc-23-1534	Architect/ RIBA	Conversion to HMO	No heritage values discussed, only 'old style' list description is included	No	NPPF, Local Plan, Conservation area statement

Sources: Coventry City Council; London Borough of Richmond upon Thames; Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk; Northumberland Council; Swindon Council.

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Resumen

"Tomando conciencia de la importancia del patrimonio en decisiones de planificación en Inglaterra: Situación actual"

Esta investigación se centra en los retos que plantea el sistema de planificación urbana de Inglaterra, cuyo objetivo es ayudar a las autoridades de planificación local (LPA) a tomar decisiones sobre el entorno histórico en todo el país. Junto con el sistema de valores de Historic England, existe una gran cantidad de directrices sobre cómo interpretar correctamente los valores para determinar la importancia de un bien patrimonial, que van desde lo puramente estético hasta un enfoque holístico que abarca valores intangibles y tangibles. Hay también otras dificultades, como la confusión reinante sobre cuáles son los mecanismos necesarios para presentar una comprensión holística del entorno histórico. Esta investigación pretende analizar hasta qué punto estas formas de orientación, junto con los documentos de política, influyen en el modo de entender la importancia de los bienes patrimoniales en Inglaterra. Con el fin de obtener información, se adoptó un enfoque de estudio de casos para examinar cinco informes de patrimonio de cinco LPA seleccionados al azar, lo que dio como resultado 25 informes

sobre la importancia patrimonial. Este enfoque permitió una comprensión inicial de algunos de los factores que contribuyen a lo que se descubrió que era una falta general de calidad, reconocimiento o comprensión de la influencia del valor y la significancia en las decisiones de planificación sobre el entorno histórico.

المخلص

فهم أهمية التراث في قرارات التخطيط في إنجلترا: الوضع الحالي
تركز هذه الدراسة على التحديات القائمة داخل نظام التخطيط العمراني في إنجلترا، والذي يُفترض أن يساهم في دعم اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بالبيئة التاريخية من قبل السلطات المحلية للتخطيط (LPA) في مختلف أنحاء البلاد. إلى جانب نظام القيم الذي تتبناه مؤسسة "هستوريك إنجلاند" (Historic England)، توجد مجموعة كبيرة من الإرشادات التي تهدف إلى توضيح كيفية فهم القيم المختلفة بشكل سليم لتحديد أهمية المواقع أو العناصر التراثية، وذلك من خلال منظور يشمل القيم المادية وغير المادية إلى جانب القيم الجمالية.

ومع ذلك، تواجه هذه العملية صعوبات، من بينها الغموض بشأن الآليات اللازمة لتقديم فهم شامل ومتكامل للبيئة التاريخية. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل مدى تأثير هذه الإرشادات والوثائق السياسية في تشكيل فهم الجهات المعنية لأهمية العناصر التراثية داخل إنجلترا. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم اعتماد منهج دراسة الحالة لتحليل خمس وثائق تقييم لتراث مختلف، تم اختيارها عشوائياً من خمس سلطات تخطيط محلية، مما أسفر عن تحليل 25 بياناً حول أهمية التراث. أتاح هذا النهج فهماً أولياً لبعض العوامل الفاعلة التي تساهم في ما وُجد أنه نقص عام في الجودة والتقدير والفهم لتأثير مفهومي "القيمة" و"الأهمية" في قرارات التخطيط المتعلقة بالبيئة التاريخية. وتنعكس نتائج هذا البحث على قضايا تتعلق بكيفية تأهيل ممارسي حفظ المباني التاريخية، وغياب الاعتراف المهني بهم، إلى جانب صعوبة الوصول إلى معلومات التخطيط، وأوجه القصور في التشريعات ذات الصلة بحماية البيئة التاريخية.

Resumo

“Entendendo a relevância do patrimônio no planejamento de decisões na Inglaterra: a situação atual”

Esta pesquisa foca nos desafios existentes no sistema de planejamento urbano da Inglaterra que é destinado a auxiliar a tomada de decisão ligadas ao meio ambiente histórico para Autoridades de Planejamento Locais (LPA) de todo o país. Juntamente ao sistema de valores de Historic England há uma vasta quantidade de diretrizes sobre como entender apropriadamente os valores para determinar a importância de um bem patrimonial que se estendem do puramente estético ao olhar para uma abordagem holística que contém valores imateriais e materiais. Há também dificuldades, como confusão nos mecanismos necessários para apresentar uma compreensão holística do meio ambiente histórico. Esta pesquisa busca analisar a extensão que estas diretrizes, ao lado de documentos de políticas, estão influenciando a compreensão da relevância dos bens patrimoniais na Inglaterra. A fim de obter *insights*, uma abordagem por estudo de caso foi adotada para examinar cinco declarações de patrimônio selecionados aleatoriamente de cinco LPA's, resultando em 25 declarações de importância patrimonial. Esta abordagem possibilitou um entendimento inicial sobre alguns dos atores que contribuíram para o que foi descoberto como uma ausência geral de qualidade, reconhecimento ou compreensão da influência que significado e valor têm no planejamento de decisões sobre o ambiente histórico. Isto tem implicações em termos de como nós educamos os profissionais de edificações históricas e a falta

de seu reconhecimento profissional, assim como a acessibilidade ao planejamento de informações e o fundamento da legislação em relação ao meio ambiente histórico.

摘要

“在英格兰规划决策中理解遗产价值: 当前现状”

本研究聚焦于英格兰城市规划系统中的挑战, 该系统旨在帮助全国的地方规划局 (LPA) 做出历史环境决策。除了英格兰历史遗产保护局 (Historic England) 的价值体系以外, 还有大量关于如何正确理解价值以确定遗产资产重要性的指南。这些指南从纯粹的审美价值扩展到包含有形和无形价值的整体方法。此外, 还存在一些困难, 比如人们在全面理解历史环境的机制上容易混淆。本研究试图分析这些指南的形式和政策文件在多大程度上影响了人们对英格兰遗产资产重要性的理解。为了深入了解情况, 我们采用了案例研究法, 从五个地方规划局中随机选取了五份遗产声明, 对共计 25 份遗产重要性声明进行了研究。该方法有助于初步了解影响历史环境规划决策的一些因素, 并揭示了对遗产重要性和价值在质量、认知或理解上的整体性不足。这对我们如何教育历史建筑从业者、他们缺乏专业认可度、规划信息的可获取性以及涉及历史环境的立法基础都有影响。

Biography

John Somers is a Senior Lecturer in urban planning and the historic environment at the University of Westminster in the School of Architecture and Cities. His research interests include retrofitting historic buildings, heritage at risk, assessing heritage significance, and investigating inequality as a result of legislation and the resultant design of the built environment.