

**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CONSERVATION STRATEGY  
2014-2019**

## Conservation Strategy 2014-19

Comment by CEO

“ .....  
..... ”

*The Council has the twin role of ensuring the protection of the historic environment together with its enhancement through the delivery of high quality buildings.*

*The last Conservation Strategy was approved in July 2007, and now requires updating. Significant changes have occurred: at the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework and the new Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act have been introduced; at Borough level, a new Core Strategy has been adopted.*

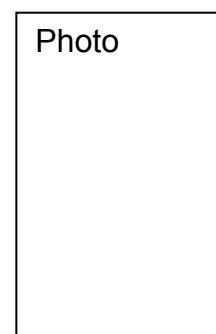
*The NPPF recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.*

*Our Local Plan meets the NPPF requirements in providing a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. The policy recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.*

*Recognising the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring, this strategy represents Dacorum’s commitment to protect and enhance the historic built environment by*

- *sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *ensuring new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

Signature



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*Bovingdon Conservation Area*

## Introduction

Dacorum has a rich historic environment with 941 Listed Building entries, relating to some 2,000 individual buildings and 25 Conservation Areas.



The historic built environment contributes immeasurably to the quality of our lives. Historic features add tradition, continuity and character to a place, as well as being an asset for the economy, the environment and the wider community. There are education and community benefits to discovering our heritage and crafts. There are significant benefits to the environment through the reuse of historic buildings. The promotion of cultural heritage and tourism, associated with historic places, is a driver of economic development. Higher land values are invariably linked with such design excellence. Total return on listed properties outperforms non-listed properties over the short, medium and long-term.<sup>1</sup>

The historic built environment is under pressure from development - the threat of infilling and replacement with new, sometimes uninspiring buildings and the erosion of historic features in the public realm need to be carefully mitigated and managed. Equally, there is scope for regeneration and considerable enhancement of the character and appearance of some existing places in the Borough.



This strategy identifies the Council's priorities over the next seven years for the conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the Borough's heritage assets. It represents a significant opportunity for conservation to play a dynamic role in ensuring these assets are at the centre of place-making in Dacorum.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/a-e/encouraging-investment-industrial-heritage-at-risk-investment-performance.pdf>

*All development will favour the conservation of heritage assets. (Policy CS27)*

## **Heritage and the Council's Vision and Priorities**

This Conservation Strategy will assist in delivering the Council's Vision and some of its Key Priorities:

### *Regeneration*

Heritage excellence and variety encourages tourism to Dacorum, which in turn creates economic benefits. Every £1 of investment in the historic environment generates £1.6 of additional economic activity over a ten year period.<sup>2</sup> People gain enjoyment from visiting memorable places. Opportunities for engagement with heritage activities comprise part of the tourism offer of an attractive place to live and work and visit. Having a vibrant community that appreciates, engages with and actively promotes its heritage helps regenerate the area as a whole and enhances its reputation.

### *Safe and Clean Environment*

In conserving and enhancing our built and natural environment, heritage excellence helps to promote active and healthy lifestyles and reduce crime.

### *Building Community Capacity*

Dacorum has a thriving heritage community. Heritage activity provides opportunities for volunteering and a focus for community action and engagement, thereby building community capacity. By engaging with our stakeholders, the Borough will deliver the infrastructure necessary to promote our vibrant heritage sector and rich local history.

### *Dacorum Delivers*

The promotion of local heritage engenders a sense of civic pride, encouraging residents to be proud to be part of Dacorum. Heritage excellence clearly benefits the reputation of the Borough.



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<sup>2</sup> <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/Previous-Reports/HC-Economic-Impact/>

Heritage Assets include all the valued components of the historic environment. *“All heritage assets are important and should be conserved. The weight given to the specific form of protection or conservation will vary according to the importance of that asset.”*<sup>3</sup>

**Our remit**

**All aspects of Dacorum’s historic built environment**

- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Parks & Gardens
- Buildings at Risk
- Historic landscapes including our portion of the Chilterns AONB
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Heritage Assets within the Public Realm

**How we do it**

<b>RESEARCH to</b>	<b>ADVICE on</b>	<b>ACTION to</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify ‘significance’ of assets, gaps in knowledge and aspects of local distinctiveness</li> <li>• consult and liaise with stakeholders and partners on heritage issues</li> <li>• work in partnership to secure funding to improve heritage assets</li> <li>• feed into watching and development briefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conservation of existing listed buildings</li> <li>• changes to Conservation Areas</li> <li>• changes to heritage assets through the planning process</li> <li>• new buildings within their settings</li> <li>• the Council’s own historic property and asset transfer</li> <li>• public realm enhancements where they affect heritage assets</li> <li>• policy development affecting heritage</li> <li>• development briefs and regeneration proposals</li> <li>• 106/CIL Agreements</li> <li>• enforcement issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with owners and agents to achieve satisfactory outcomes to applications affecting heritage assets</li> <li>• deliver the programme of Conservation Area Appraisals</li> <li>• deliver high quality enhancement projects where they affect heritage assets</li> <li>• recommend Article 4 Directions</li> <li>• produce descriptions and lists of locally listed buildings</li> <li>• secure ‘Spot Listings’</li> <li>• work with Enforcement where necessary</li> <li>• recommend Building Preservation Notices and Compulsory Purchase Orders and serve where appropriate</li> <li>• take part in relevant Appeals</li> <li>• maintain records of heritage assets</li> <li>• find solutions for Buildings at Risk</li> <li>• proactively explore opportunities for generating income</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Dacorum Borough Council’s Core Strategy: Paragraph 17.3



*The integrity, setting and distinctiveness of designated and undesignated heritage assets will be protected, conserved and if appropriate enhanced. CS27*

## **Areas for Action**

### Photographic Database of Listed Buildings

The Council will seek to construct a database of photographs of Listed Buildings in the Borough. This is a vital record of historic buildings which aids assessment of applications for listed building consent and provides a dated benchmark for use in investigating any alleged unauthorised changes to Listed Buildings. The original 1994 Survey Photographs will be scanned for comparison.



### Listed Building Survey

Currently some of Dacorum's Listed Building surveys are the oldest in Hertfordshire dating back to 1973. Through the on-going programme of Conservation Area Appraisals the Council will review of the current stock of Listed Buildings, and potential additional buildings worthy of Listing. Buildings and structures outside a Conservation Area will be assessed and re-assessed on an ad-hoc basis as they come to light.

### "Buildings at Risk"

Dacorum's 'Buildings at Risk' register was originally produced in 1993 and was last reviewed in 1999. The Council will seek during the period of this strategy to re-assess all of the buildings at Risk in the Borough.

The Council will seek to identify vulnerable heritage assets which are not being maintained or allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. Assessments will be made, as required, when these vulnerable assets come to light as the appropriate and proportionate course of action to protect them. This may include the use of formal enforcement action, Article 4 Directions, building preservation and urgent work notices, spot listing and applications for funding.



*Development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas. Negative features and problems identified in conservation area appraisals will be ameliorated or removed. (Policy CS27)*

### Conservation Area Character Appraisals

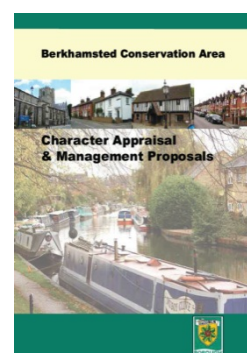
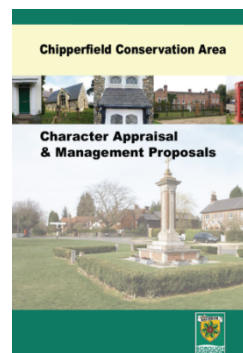
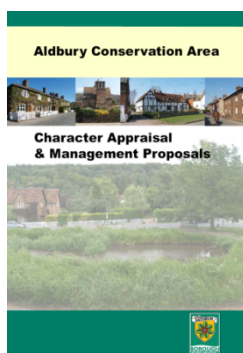
Appraisals assist in defining local distinctiveness and help to guide applicants and agents on planning issues. Character statements with policy objectives are the main outputs of the appraisal work. It also provides the basis for promoting enhancement work in historic areas. Conservation Area boundaries are also reviewed during the Appraisal process.

Of the 25 Conservation Areas in the Borough, the following have been completed:

Conservation Area	Approved
Aldbury	29 July 2008
Bovingdon	28 July 2011
Chipperfield	28 July 2011
Frithsden	28 July 2011
Great Gaddesden	28 July 2011
Nettleden	28 July 2011
Hemel Hempstead	21 January 2014
Berkhamsted	21 January 2014

Appraisals for all remaining conservation areas will be produced within the timescale of this strategy.

Tring & Markyate	2014-15
Kings Langley (3 areas), Flaunden, Northchurch	2015
Ringhshall, Dudswell, Winkwell	2016
Wilstone, Flamstead, Potten End, Water End	2017
Piccotts End, Little Gaddesden, Long Marston	2018





*The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining it (NPPF)*



### Locally Listed Buildings and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Many of Dacorum's heritage assets are already covered by formal designations. There are however other heritage assets without such protection under national legislation, but whose architectural and/or historic role needs to be recognised to ensure they are accorded an appropriate level of protection.

Locally listed buildings are being identified through the production of Conservation Area Appraisals. Hertfordshire Gardens Trust is surveying Dacorum's Parks and Gardens. Other locally-listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets will be identified through the planning process and considered according to policy and guidance.

Methods of identifying non-designated assets outside Conservation Areas being considered are:

- site allocations DPD and associated master planning process
- neighbourhood plans
- nominations to the Assistant Director, Planning and Regeneration.

Whichever route is followed, owners and local residents or groups with local knowledge are consulted. Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure property owners are informed of the Council's intention to locally list or designate their property in some way and are provided with draft descriptions.

The process allows for properties to be afforded weight as a heritage asset for the purposes of Policy CS27 in the Council's Core Strategy whilst the consultation is undertaken. The process will operate to a 3 month time frame with any decisions to designate requiring the approval of the Development Control Committee of the Council.

The process for the assessment of whether buildings or structures should be designated as heritage assets is set out at Appendix 1.

The criteria used for assessing any undesignated heritage assets are set out in Appendix 2.

Article 4 Directions

Article 4 Directions are issued by the Council in exceptional circumstances where specific control over development is required, primarily where the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened. Such Directions are usually applied over an area rather than an individual property and are registered as a Local Land Charge, so that subsequent owners of a property affected will normally be aware of their existence. The effect of such a Direction is to remove permitted development rights, thereby necessitating a planning application to be made.

The use of Article 4(2) Directions can in certain circumstances be used as a tool for controlling development in sensitive areas where survival of important architectural features is threatened. The Council has applied Article 4 Directions in a number of key areas, particularly in Berkhamsted.

In deciding which buildings should be protected we follow certain criteria to make sure that the same standards are used on all properties considered for Article 4 Protection.

<i>Individual</i>	The building should have some distinctive feature that is either architectural, historical, representative of a particular style or form of building or make a positive contribution to the street scene and its surroundings.
<i>Group Value</i>	Although individual buildings are considered, in general, groups of buildings are preferred because of their greater contribution to the environment of the area.
<i>State of Preservation</i>	Where possible buildings should be in their original, or near original, condition. The greater the degree of alteration the less suitable the property is for protection. The exception to this is where one building in a group has been drastically altered but the remainder are intact.
<i>The Surroundings</i>	The quality of the building's surroundings is important, not so much the state of upkeep as the proximity of Listed Buildings, or other groups to be protected by a Direction.
<i>Potential Threat</i>	Evidence that the building itself, or a similar building elsewhere, is likely to be altered.
<i>Suitability</i>	The particular features or character of the building to be protected must satisfy one of the categories controlled by an Article 4 Direction.

With the production of the Conservation Area Appraisals, the significance of heritage assets within each area has been identified and informs the selection of properties for Article 4(2) Directions.

Some properties outside Conservation Areas will also benefit from the serving of an Article 4 Direction. These will be considered on an ad hoc basis as opportunities arise.



## Enhancement Projects

The Council's Corporate Regeneration Group will play a role in shaping and delivering capital projects.

- Town Centre Improvements across the Borough
- Projects in Hemel Hempstead identified from the Town Masterplan 2013 such as the Restoration of the Water Gardens and others affecting heritage assets
- Environmental improvements across the Borough identified through local development documents and Conservation Area Appraisals
- Enhanced interpretation and recognition of the New Town and key buildings  
Potential regeneration schemes identified through conservation area appraisals

In addition, the Council will seek to support schemes that are developed in partnership or that attract additional external funding.



### Guidance

The adopted Core Strategy provides the policy framework for considering development proposals for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The Council will only produce specific guidance if it is unavailable elsewhere, and it is necessary to support the Council's priorities.

The Development Management DPD will be supported by SPD Guidance relating to the Historic Environment. This will follow the completion of the Conservation Area Appraisals, which is planned for 2019.

Specific guidance can also provide a valuable source of information to property owners of Listed Buildings, help promote the enhancement and protection of historic areas and provide clarity for applicants to guide them through the pre-application process. The intention is not to duplicate advice which is readily available on other organisations' websites, such as that provided by English Heritage.

### Supporting the Planning Enforcement function

Listed buildings are a finite and irreplaceable asset. The Council will use the powers invested us through this legislation to ensure that Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other such protected areas and assets, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess are conserved to the highest standards.

Where harm has been incurred, support will be given to assist any enforcement investigation in assessing whether a breach of Listed Building control has taken place and works have been carried out against adopted policies and national advice provided in the NPPF and legislation.



### Promoting Heritage in Dacorum

There are many ways in which the Council helps to raise awareness of the rich heritage within the Borough.

- Putting forward buildings in the Borough for awards
- Identifying and building awareness raising into enhancement projects
- Working with a wide range of partners internally and externally to raise awareness of heritage assets and how they can be appreciated as a means of promoting tourism
- Exploring new methods to engage with communities when consulting on historic building environment issues
- Heritage Open Days
- Drawing up and entering into Heritage Partnership Agreements
- Identifying significant heritage assets and where appropriate, putting forward buildings for 'Spot-listing'
- Identifying potential new Conservation Areas
- Providing talks to stakeholder groups in the Borough





*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.*

### Improving Conservation advice in Development Management

Conservation officers provide advice on Planning and Listed Building Applications and generally advise on numerous enquiries regarding development proposals.

In the light of policy and legislation, any applications involving alterations to Listed Buildings are fully assessed and provided with specialist informed advice. The Council seeks to provide effective and speedy advice with consistency running through from inception with pre-application enquiries to applications to ensure the quality of applications and decisions.

### Responding to Changes in Legislation

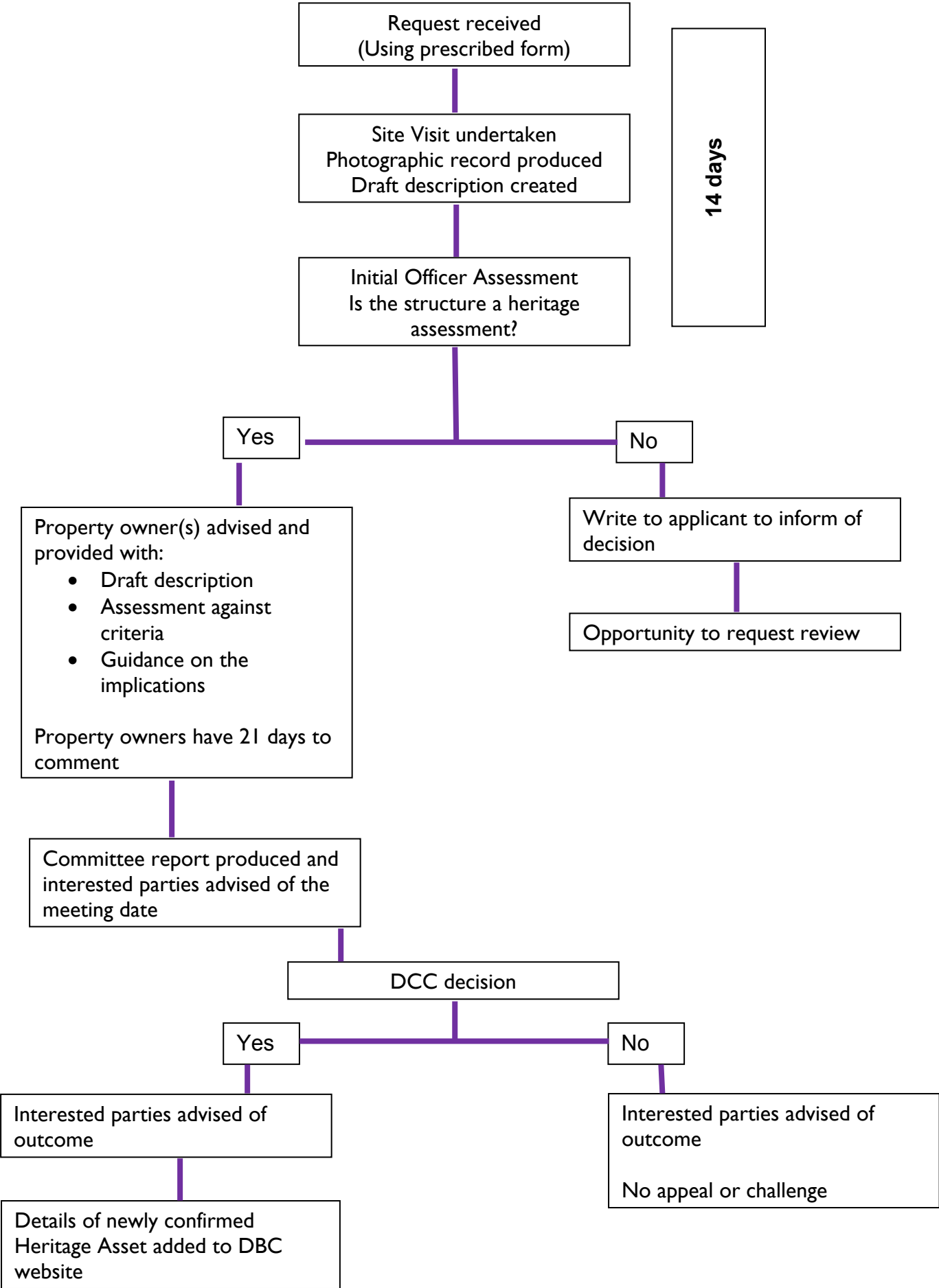
The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (ERR) Act 2013 has introduced a number of changes to the listed building consent system in England. Apart from replacing Conservation Area Consent with the need to apply for Planning Permission, and allowing new listings to be more precise in defining the special interest of the structure, opportunities exist:

- to establish Heritage Partnership Agreements which allow listed building consent to be granted for specified works of alteration or extension, but not demolition, to individual or groups of listed buildings covered by the Agreement.
- for Local planning authorities to create Listed Building Consent Orders which grants listed building consent in respect of works of any description for the alteration or extension, but not demolition, of listed buildings. The consent granted by the Order means that the owner(s) of the listed buildings covered will not need to submit repetitive applications for works already granted consent by the Order.
- to apply at any time for a Certificate of Immunity from listing, which lasts for five years, Previously it could only be done if the building was subject to an application for planning permission. This is so that the special interest of the building can be established at the earliest stage in planning for any development.
- for Local Planning Authorities to issue Certificates of Lawfulness of Proposed Works. These provide formal confirmation that proposed works of alteration or extension, but not demolition, of a listed building do not require listed building consent because they do not affect its character. There is no obligation for anyone to apply for a Certificate.

Heritage Partnership Agreements will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they promote improvements and understanding. Whilst this Strategy does not highlight the Council's specific intention to apply any listed building consent orders, these will be considered on an ad hoc basis as opportunities arise.

A system will be implemented to respond to requests for Certificates of Lawfulness. The process essentially formalises a process already followed whereby enquiries as to whether listed building consent is required are logged and answered.

**Appendix I - Process Map: Assessment of Heritage Assets**



## Appendix 2 - Criteria for assessing undesignated Heritage Assets

<i>Age</i>	The age of the asset may be an important criterion and can be adjusted to take into account distinctive local characteristics
<i>Rarity</i>	Appropriate for all assets, as judged against local characteristics
<i>Aesthetic value</i>	The intrinsic design value of an asset relating to local styles, materials or any other distinctive local characteristics
<i>Group value</i>	Groupings of assets with a clear visual design or historic relationship
<i>Evidential value</i>	The significance of a local historic asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant contemporary or historic written record
<i>Historic association</i>	The significance of a local heritage asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant historical association of local or national note, including links to important figures
<i>Archaeological interest</i>	This may be an appropriate reason to designate a locally significant asset on the grounds of archaeological interest if the evidence base is sufficiently compelling and if a distinct area can be identified
<i>Designed landscape</i>	Relating to the interest attached to locally important designed landscapes, parks and gardens
<i>Landmark status</i>	An asset with strong communal or historical associations, or because it has especially striking aesthetic value, may be singled out as a landmark within the local scene
<i>Social and communal value</i>	Relating to places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence; often residing in intangible aspects of heritage contributing to the “collective memory” of a place

Glossary

**Article 4 direction:** A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

**Buildings at Risk:** The Building at Risk register is a register of buildings whose structure & stability is at risk or being compromised due to lack of maintenance

**Certificate of Immunity:** Confirms that a building will not be subject to Listing for a period of five years.

**Certificates of Lawfulness of Proposed Works:** Formal confirmation that proposed works of alteration or extension, but not demolition, of a listed building do not require listed building consent.

**Conservation Area:** A Conservation Area comprises an area of special architectural or historic interest. Designation as a Conservation Area provides the opportunity to preserve or enhance the area's character by controlling building demolition, allowing greater control over new development and protecting important features such as trees.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Heritage Partnership Agreement:** Allows listed building consent to be granted for specified works of alteration or extension, but not demolition, to individual or groups of listed buildings covered by the Agreement.

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Listed building:** A Listed Building is included in the Statutory List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, Grade II, Grade II\* and Grade I.

**Listed Building Consent Orders:** Grants listed building consent in respect of works of any description for the alteration or extension, but not demolition, of listed buildings.

**Locally Listed Building:** A Locally Listed Building is a building, structure or feature which, whilst not listed by the Secretary of State, the Council feels to be an important part of Dacorum's heritage due to its architectural, historic or archaeological significance.