

# CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

**First Stage  
Consultation**



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# DEFINITIONS

This document uses particular words and phrases to describe the historic environment and the ways in which it is valued and managed. Their specific or technical meaning as used in this document is set out below.

## **Conservation**

The process of managing change in ways that will best sustain the values of a place in its contexts, and which recognises opportunities to reveal and reinforce those values

## **Conservation area**

'An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance', designated under what is now s69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

## **Context**

A wider framework within which the values of a place should be considered: eg visual, functional, intellectual

## **Enhance**

To strengthen quality or value

## **Expert**

A person who has specialist knowledge, skill and experience

## **Heritage**

All inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility

### Heritage, cultural

All inherited resources which people identify and value as a reflection and expression of their evolving knowledge, beliefs and traditions, and of their understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others

### Heritage, natural

All inherited habitats, species, geology and landforms, including those in and under water, and their natural beauty and amenity

## **Historic environment**

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time

## **Material**

Relevant to and having a perceptible effect [on value(s)]

## **Place**

Any part of the historic environment, of any scale, that has an identity perceived by people

## **Practitioner**

A person actively engaged in a discipline relating to the conservation of the historic environment

## **Preserve**

To keep safe from harm

## **Reasonable**

Fair and sensible

## **Reinforce**

To strengthen and support

## **Restore**

To return to a known earlier state

## **Reveal**

To make visible or known

## **Transparent**

Open to public scrutiny

## **Setting**

The visual surroundings in which a significant place is now experienced

## **Significance**

The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place

## **Sustain**

To maintain, nurture and affirm validity

## **Sustainable**

Capable of meeting present needs without compromising ability to meet future needs

## **Value**

An aspect of worth or importance, in this context ascribed by people to places

### Value, aesthetic

Relating to the ways in which people respond to a place through sensory and intellectual experience of it

### Value, community

Relating to the meanings of a place for the people who identify with it, and whose collective memory it holds

### Value, evidential

Relating to the potential of a place to yield primary information about past human activity

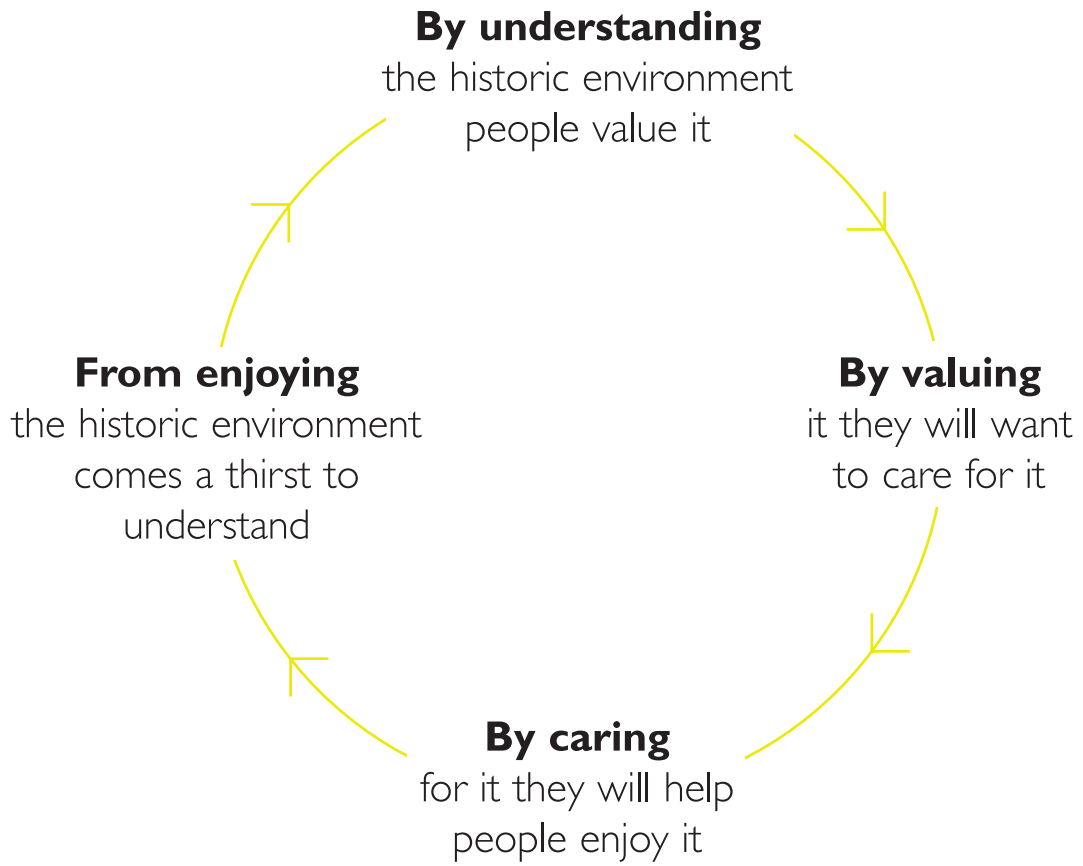
### Value, historical

Relating to the ways in which a place can provide direct links to past people, events and aspects of life

### Value, instrumental

Economic, educational, recreational and other benefits which exist as a consequence of the cultural or natural heritage values of a place

# The heritage cycle



# FOREWORD

The management of the historic environment depends on three things:

- sound principles
- clear policies, based on these principles
- the quality of the decisions that stem from these policies.

The primary aim of the *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* is to support the quality of decision-making, with the ultimate objective of creating a management regime for all aspects of the historic environment that is clear and transparent in its purpose and sustainable in its application.

English Heritage is developing *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* to inform and advise all those involved with the sustainable management of England's historic environment. After formal consultations with government departments, and expert stakeholders, we now intend to consult with peers and partners initially on the *Principles* – through

this document, our website and regional workshops, and subsequently on the *Policies and Guidance* for publication in the autumn of 2006.

The work is urgently needed because existing guidance on ethical and other considerations involved with the conservation of the historic environment is now becoming outdated, is forgotten or misunderstood. This is especially important as in recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on the value and potential of the historic environment as a whole, rather than in merely those parts of it where specific significance is recognised by official designation and protection at national or local levels.

New approaches to identifying and sustaining the values of places, particularly in conservation planning, and the methods advocated by the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS, 2004) have also been applied in England, though not always appropriately. The involvement of the public in deciding what is valuable and why has also become increasingly important, especially in the wake of *Power of Place*. Finally, the Government's heritage protection reform proposals are likely to lead to legislative changes where clear direction and advice will be essential.

Building on these and other developments, we have formulated this draft set of general principles for the conservation of the historic environment to present an integrated and consistent approach to sustaining its values. The *Principles* are intended primarily for use by English Heritage. It is hoped, however, that they will also be helpful to all those concerned with managing the historic environment, not least local planning authorities. They are intended to amplify and reinforce the well-established guidance set out in the Government's Planning Policy Guidance notes 15 and 16, *Planning and the Historic Environment* and *Archaeology and Planning* (DoE & DNH 1994 and DoE 1990) and we hope that in due course they may be helpful to Government in the development of the forthcoming Planning Policy Statement (PPS).

**Sir Neil Cossons**

Chairman

English Heritage

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	
Aims	11–12
Sources	13
Structure and concepts	14
CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES	17–31
OUR QUESTIONS	35
HOW TO RESPOND	39
REFERENCES	43

# INTRODUCTION

## AIMS

In little more than a century, we have progressed from limited legal protection of a few monuments in the landscape to an awareness of the potential of the historic dimension of the environment as a whole to enrich people's lives. Over that time, the formal recognition of places as part of the cultural heritage has expanded, first to historic buildings, then to conservation areas, and now to embrace World Heritage Sites, historic parks and gardens, battlefields and maritime heritage. As the concept of heritage in the environment has expanded, so it has become democratised, as the emphasis has shifted from monuments towards people. Quite simply, heritage is what people value for reasons beyond mere utility.

The Civic Amenities Act 1967 began this shift, introducing conservation areas designated by local authorities as a means to safeguard places that people value at the local level. The Act's fundamental innovation was to extend the concept of conservation from mere 'preservation' – keeping safe from harm – to embrace 'enhancement' – positive change. Conservation has come to be seen as the management of change, seeking to retain what people value about places, not simply because they value it, but as the catalyst for changes that we hope will be valued by future generations. This makes it possible to apply the idea of conservation to the historic environment in general, which is itself the result of change and evolution over thousands of years.

The historic environment is increasingly seen as a resource that should be used sustainably for the benefit of present and future generations, a resource which can only be sustained within a broad social and economic policy framework. Against that background, the limitations of the compartmentalised approach to the management of the historic environment imposed by the accumulated regimes of designation and management have become increasingly clear. As well as being unwieldy, these separate regimes make it difficult to take proper account of complex historic places, in which the significance of the whole may be much greater than the sum of the component parts.

In response to these difficulties, the Government has initiated a fundamental reform of the heritage protection system in England. Subject to the outcome of the current programme of pilot projects, it is proposed that this will involve the establishment of a single, integrated *Register of Historic Sites and Buildings of England*. This decision has in turn underlined the need

for an integrated approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment as a whole – one that would be applicable to any and all aspects of it, whether individually or in combination. The *Principles* we have set out in this consultation paper are intended to provide that framework, compatible both with existing legislation and policy, and the anticipated changes. Alongside the *Principles*, we are developing detailed *Policies and Guidance* on how they should be applied to the management of change.

In the *Principles* we recognise the fundamental importance of public engagement in the process of understanding the values of places and how they should be managed. This is already reflected in, for example, the procedures for ensuring community involvement included in the Local Development Framework system, recently introduced to guide local spatial planning in England. The *Principles* are also based on the concept that cultural and natural heritage values should be considered in parallel, within a similar intellectual framework, reflected in the increasingly close co-operation between managers of cultural and natural heritage interests.

The *Principles*, and in due course their accompanying *Policies and Guidance*, are intended primarily to assist the staff and commissioners of English Heritage in fulfilling our statutory role as the Government's adviser on the historic environment in England. At the same time, we hope that the final document, like all English Heritage guidance, will be read and used by everyone concerned with the historic environment, especially local authorities, the owners of historic places and their advisers.

## SOURCES

Statements of principle and policy on heritage conservation abound at national and international levels, produced both by governmental and non-governmental organisations. In England, the first formal statement was the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings' *Manifesto* of 1877. Each of these documents has been specific to its own time and place, but each has been informed by, and has built upon, what went before. They have also responded to changing perceptions, both among the public and practitioners, of what is significant and how it should be managed. These *Principles* seek to build upon that long tradition.

Because the *Principles* adopt a 'values-based' approach to conservation, we have naturally drawn on the work of James Semple Kerr (2000) and the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 2004). In their emphasis on the need for public engagement and recognition of values beyond those protected through statutory designation, the *Principles* also refer back to *Power of Place* (EH 2000). They reflect, too, many of the presumptions of the *World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO 1972), with its call to give all natural and cultural heritage a function in the life of communities.

The *European Landscape Convention* (CoE 2000) has also been influential, not least for its definition of a landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people...'; its references to the need to consider sustaining cultural values in managing all landscapes, and the importance of public engagement in the process. Some ideas in the *Principles* reflect those of the *Framework Convention on the Values of Cultural Heritage for Society* (CoE 2005), recently opened for signature.

The most important source of inspiration, however, has been the knowledge and experience of English Heritage commissioners, staff and committee members, distilled through debate. This consultation provides the opportunity to continue that process through review by our colleagues in the sector.

## STRUCTURE & CONCEPTS

Sections 1–3 of the *Principles* address the concept of the historic environment, why people value it, the benefits it brings to society, and our responsibility to pass it on to the future. In Sections 4–7, we outline policies, processes and criteria for the sustainable management of significant places, on the understanding that a place is any part of the historic environment that people perceive as having particular identity or distinctiveness. It can be of any scale, from, for example, a milestone to a building, an historic area, a town or a region.

We have deliberately tried to avoid terminology used in current legislation and public policies that specifically relates to existing heritage designations. This is both in anticipation of reform of the present system of heritage protection, and to avoid the implication that the *Principles* are concerned only with places that meet particular thresholds of significance for national or local designation. This should not, of course, be taken to mean that every aspect of the historic environment is of equal value or worth conserving. We are simply proposing that an understanding of the values a place has, both for its local community and wider interest groups, should be seen as the basis of sound decisions about its future.

Those who wish to make changes to places of established value are already expected to justify their proposals in the context of national policies for specific aspects of the historic environment. These are set out, for example, in relation to listed buildings in PPG 15 (DoE/DNH 1994, para 3.4) and archaeological remains in PPG 16 (DoE 1990, para 22). Open and reasoned argument is fundamental to sound conservation decisions. While there is general agreement that conservation requires a cautious approach, English Heritage does not believe that a responsibility to protect the public interest in the heritage values of places can reasonably be interpreted as justifying opposition to change *per se*. However, decisions about change do need to be informed by a clear appreciation of the risks posed to the values of the place concerned, both now and as they may be perceived by future generations.

We must always recognise that change offers the potential not only to protect the existing values of places, but also to enhance and add to them. It is the means by which each generation aspires to create an even richer historic environment than the one it inherited, one that will in its own turn be valued by the generations to whom it is bequeathed.

# CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

# THE PRINCIPLES

- 1** The historic environment is a shared resource
- 2** It is essential to understand and sustain what is valuable in the historic environment
- 3** Everyone can make a contribution
- 4** Understanding the values of places is vital
- 5** Places should be managed to sustain their significance
- 6** Decisions about change must be reasonable and transparent
- 7** It is essential to document and learn from decisions

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 1

Human activity has been shaping the landscape of England for at least 6,000 years, from the time when people first began to settle and farm the land (the beginning of the Neolithic period). Each generation has begun not with a blank canvas, but with an increasingly complex inheritance. Shifting shorelines, coastal exploitation and the legacy of shipwrecks mean that this complex landscape extends far beyond the present coastline. The 'historic (dimension of the) environment' includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, and therefore embraces all surviving remnants of past landscapes.

The historic environment, the concept of which is established in Principle 1.1, is a cultural and natural heritage resource shared by communities characterised not just by geographical location but also by common interests and values. Principle 1.2 emphasises the important consequential (technically, 'instrumental') benefits or potential, for example as an educational, recreational, or economic resource, which the historic environment provides. The seamless cultural and natural strands of the historic environment are a vital part of everyone's heritage, held in stewardship for the benefit of future generations.

Principle 1.3 provides an aspirational definition of what is necessary to sustain the values of the historic environment, and thus a context for the practical definition of conservation at Principle 5.1. It is deliberately couched in terms that echo the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development: 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987).

**Q.1a** Are we right to define the historic environment in these broad terms – as being everywhere and not just confined to specifically designated places?

**Q.1b** Do you agree that the historic environment is valuable for a range of reasons – and that it is a resource in which everyone has an interest?

## **I The historic environment is a shared resource**

**I.1** The physical environment has been shaped by people responding to their inherited surroundings. It contains a unique record of past human activity which reflects the aspirations, ingenuity and investment of resources of previous generations. People value this historic environment as part of their cultural and natural heritage.

**I.2** The historic environment reflects the evolving knowledge, beliefs and traditions of multiple communities. It gives distinctiveness, depth and quality to the places in which people live. It is an economic asset, and provides a resource for our education and enjoyment.

**I.3** Each generation should sustain and shape the historic environment in ways that allow people to enjoy and benefit from it, but which do not compromise the ability of future generations to do the same.

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 2

The historic environment is constantly changing. Trees and plants mature and die, the coastline alters, and all man-made buildings and structures decay through the action of the elements, however slowly, unless deliberately maintained. Places – landscapes and buildings – are also changed simply by their use, as well as through deliberate decisions, for example to develop or redevelop, or to change established patterns of land management.

These processes have shaped the historic environment, and will continue to do so. But people are becoming increasingly conscious of the cultural and natural heritage values that they attach to places, regardless of ownership, not least because of the scale of past loss. There is an increasing awareness of the need, in decision-making at every level, consciously to take existing values into account, and to seek to add value through the changes that are made.

This does not reduce or remove the need formally to identify and designate places which are particularly valued. Designation according to agreed national criteria allows them to be managed using the specific controls, proportionate to their value, that are necessary to protect the public's interests in what is mostly private property. Currently, this is achieved through the separate pieces of national legislation that allow the scheduling of monuments, the listing of buildings and the designation of conservation areas, as well as by separate legislation concerned with the protection of the natural heritage.

**Q.2a** Is it right that society should expect change to sustain – and preferably enhance – the cultural and natural heritage values of the places affected by that change?

**Q.2b** Do you agree that communities have a legitimate interest in what happens to places they value – regardless of who actually owns them?

## **2 It is essential to understand and sustain what is valuable in the historic environment**

**2.1** Changes in the historic environment as a whole are inevitable, whether brought about by natural processes, through its use, or by people responding to social, economic and technological developments.

**2.2** In planning change or responding to natural processes, it is essential first to understand, and then to seek to sustain or enhance, cultural and natural heritage values in the historic environment.

**2.3** Heritage values represent a public interest in places, regardless of ownership. It is therefore both necessary and justified to use law and public policy to regulate the management of places of established heritage value.

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 3

What is valuable in the historic environment should not be left to practitioners alone to determine. Everyone with an interest in a place, whether as individuals or communities, should be encouraged to participate in understanding and sustaining those aspects of it that they identify with and care about. Education at every stage is important in helping people to engage in that dialogue.

Understanding and sustaining complex places requires a wide range of specialist skills, for example those of archaeologists, historians, architects, landscape architects, planners, conservators and many others. It is in the interests of practitioners to communicate the established values of places, for value is ultimately defined by public recognition. That in turn depends on understanding, and generates public support for the conservation of what is valued and enjoyed.

While there will always be a range of public opinion on the values of a particular place, it is generally influenced and informed by expert opinion. Practitioners have an obligation to take account of changing public perceptions of heritage, indeed to facilitate them and inform them in a positive way. This iterative process has been particularly evident in the thematic listing of post-war buildings.

**Q.3a** Do you agree that everyone should be able to contribute to decisions about the management of the historic environment – and are there limits to their right to do so?

**Q.3b** Our assertion that practitioners should communicate their knowledge sounds like common sense – but does it raise significant practical or ethical issues?

### **3 Everyone can make a contribution**

**3.1** Everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to understanding and managing the historic environment. Judgements about the values of places and decisions about their future should be made in ways that are accessible, inclusive and transparent.

**3.2** Practitioners should use their knowledge, skills and experience to encourage people to understand, value and care for their heritage. They play a crucial role in communicating and sustaining the established values of places, and in helping people to articulate the values they attach to places.

**3.3** Education at all stages should help to raise people's awareness and understanding of heritage values, including the varied ways in which these values are perceived by different generations and communities. It should also help people to develop, maintain and pass on their knowledge and skills.

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 4

The idea of the significance of a place being the sum of the values that people attach to it, set out in Principle 4.1, is simple, but finding out who values a place and why may involve engaging with many people. Cultural heritage value has many aspects, including the potential of a place to yield primary information about past human activity ('evidential value', which includes archaeological value), the ways in which it can provide direct links to past people, events and aspects of life ('historical value'), the ways in which people respond to a place through sensory and intellectual experience of it ('aesthetic value', which includes architectural value) and the meanings of a place for the people who identify with it, and communities for whom it is part of their collective memory ('community value').

Comparison with other similar places is an established part of assessing significance, and normally provides the basis for decisions about statutory protection, or the application of particular policies. However, the fact that a place fails to meet current criteria (either national or local) for formal designation does not negate the values it may have for particular communities (whether geographical or linked by a common interest), nor the desirability of taking some account of those values in making decisions about its future.

The range and depth of values attached to particular places slowly changes over time, both through research and by evolving public perceptions. This is demonstrated by, for example, the growth in statutory designation of Victorian and later buildings and areas, or the fact that not all buildings that win design awards go on to join the statutory lists. However, appreciation of the values of those judged to reach a threshold for statutory protection normally grows deeper and more complex with time.

We have used the word 'context' rather than 'setting' because the latter has become associated primarily with intervisibility, while context can include a range of present or past relationships with other places. They may be visual, but can as easily be, for example, functional or intellectual.

**Q.4a** Do you agree that the significance of a place is the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it?

**Q.4b** Does Principle 4.3 provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of significance?

## **4 Understanding the values of places is vital**

**4.1** The significance of a place embraces all the interdependent cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. To identify and appreciate those values, it is essential first to understand the structure and ecology of the place, how and why that has changed over time, and its present character.

**4.2** Judgements about values are necessarily specific to the time they are made. As understanding develops, and as people's perceptions evolve and places change, so assessments of significance will alter, and tend to grow more complex.

**4.3** To articulate the significance of a place, it is necessary to answer five questions:

1. In what ways is a place or any part of it valued, and by whom?
2. How do particular parts and phases of a place contribute – negatively as well as positively – to those identified values?
3. Are the values of the place enhanced or diminished by its contexts, or are they independent of them?
4. What is the relative contribution of each identified value to the overall significance of the place?
5. How clearly are those values exhibited at the place, compared to other places?

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 5

We propose in Principle 5.1 a practical definition of conservation that, in effect, embraces any action whose motivation is to sustain the significance of a place. Conservation is therefore not limited to physical interventions, but can include, for example, securing a sustainable, sympathetic use for an historic building. The definition also embraces the concept of maintaining 'authenticity' as it was articulated in the Nara Declaration (ICOMOS 1994). It is achieved by sustaining those characteristics which most truthfully reflect and embody the values attached to the place.

The process of conservation, having begun with understanding and assessing significance (Principle 4), in this section continues into decisions about action informed by that foundation of knowledge. The different values of a place (including natural heritage values) all contribute to its significance, but each may require a different conservation response. If these responses are potentially conflicting, making the optimum conservation decision demands a careful assessment of the relative importance of each value.

The established maxim that changes should be capable of being reversed so as to leave no material impact on the place as it previously existed is included, but with caveats; their application will be explored in detail in the *Policies and Guidance*. The idea of proportionate impact is intended to provide a framework within which decisions about, for example, research excavation, or restoration of a building or landscape to an earlier period, involving the permanent loss of later additions, can be considered.

Steps to counter the effects of natural change, such as cyclical maintenance to avert the decay of building elements, or succession planting in designed landscapes, are normally essential for the conservation of the most significant places. However, sustaining cultural values in the historic environment involves not only avoiding harm to what is currently valued, but also adding that which may be valued in the future. In this, our approach to new work is aspirational, not prescriptive. The less there is to value about a place now, the greater the scope which exists for new work to add value.

**Q.5a** Do you agree that conservation is about managing change in ways that best sustain and, whenever possible, enhance, the values of a place?

**Q.5b** Are we correct in our argument that irreversible intervention may be justified if it helps to reveal the values of a significant place, or sustain them for the future?

## **5 Places should be managed to sustain their significance**

**5.1** Conservation is the process of managing change in ways that will best sustain the values of a place in its contexts, and which recognises opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values.

**5.2** This involves using understanding of the significance of a place to:

1. communicate that significance to everyone concerned with the place
2. judge how it is vulnerable to particular kinds of change
3. develop strategies that would best sustain its significance in its contexts
4. mediate between options, if action to sustain one heritage value would be in conflict with action to sustain another
5. seek to reconcile the need to sustain significance with conflicting pressures for change.

**5.3** Changes should normally be devised so as to avoid material harm. Irreversible intervention in a significant place may nonetheless be justified if it provides new information about the past, reveals or reinforces the values of a place or helps sustain those values for future generations – so long as the impact is demonstrably proportionate to the predicted benefits.

**5.4** Measures taken to counter the effects of natural change, or to mitigate the effects of potential disaster, should be timely, proportionate to the identified risks and sustainable in the long term.

**5.5** New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, which may be valued in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values of the place identified through assessment of its significance.

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 6

Judgement and discrimination are necessary in gathering and presenting information about a place, to ensure that assessment is both sufficient for its purpose and efficient in its use of resources.

Decisions about change are often complex, involving balancing the value of what exists now against the potential value or benefits of the proposed change. There is rarely a single 'right answer'. In such circumstances, the reliability of information, the reasoning underlying decisions and consistency of process all assume a particular importance.

Where there is potential for conflict between conservation and other public policy objectives, we are firmly of the view that they are best reconciled or balanced through dialogue. Initially this should be focused on whether the other objectives could be achieved in a way that is less harmful to the heritage values of the place, or which would even eliminate the harm completely. Thereafter, a balance must be struck, in which the greater the significance of a place, the greater the weight that must be attached to sustaining that significance.

Statutory designation is a prime indicator of significance to society, although it may not fully reflect all the values of a place; but the absence of designation does not mean that a place is necessarily of low significance. Our wording of Principle 6.4 reflects, particularly, current policy presumptions in favour of the preservation of listed buildings and of nationally important archaeological remains, whether designated or not.

**Q.6a** Have we correctly stated the factors to be balanced when making decisions about change that could harm the significance of a place?

**Q.6b** Are we right in saying that the weight given to heritage values should be proportionate to their significance to society?

## **6 Decisions about change must be reasonable and transparent**

**6.1** The range and depth of understanding, assessment and public engagement must be sufficient properly to inform and support the decision to be made.

**6.2** Decisions about change in the historic environment demand the application of experience and judgement, in a consistent, transparent process that is guided by recognised principles and policies. They must always be reasonable and respect fundamental human rights.

**6.3** Sustaining heritage values may appear to conflict with change proposed to facilitate other public objectives, including making a significant place economically sustainable. If so, decisions should seek to reconcile or balance those objectives with sustaining the significance of the place, through exploring:

1. the extent to which conflict could be avoided or mitigated
2. the need for and benefits of the proposed change
3. the consequences of inaction.

**6.4** The weight to be attached to heritage values in making such decisions should be proportionate to the significance of those values to society.

## Explanatory notes and questions for Principle 7

We stress the value of maintaining cumulative records of decisions and actions about significant places. All too often such records are discarded on a change of ownership or management, and not duplicated in public archives.

All decisions are based on anticipated or predicted outcomes, so it is important to assess whether, in the light of the actual consequences of decisions, those predictions were correct. By such means we learn from experiment and experience, and so improve the quality of future decisions.

Where loss is unavoidable, either through natural processes such as coastal erosion, or as a result of a decision that the loss will be outweighed by other public benefits, the recovery and preservation of evidence through investigation should be the standard response. This approach is well established in archaeological policy, as is the responsibility of those initiating change, whether in the public or the private sector, to fund that work, expressed here in Principle 7.4.

**Q.7a** Do you agree that the loss of all or part of a significant place should be preceded by investigation and recording?

**Q.7b** Do you accept that this work should be the responsibility of those who are initiating the change – a principle established in archaeology by PPG 16 (DoE 1990)?

## **7 It is essential to document and learn from decisions**

**7.1** Keeping good records of decisions and of the actions that follow them is crucial to maintaining a cumulative account of what has happened to a significant place, and understanding how its significance may have been altered.

**7.2** The effects of changes to significant places should be monitored and evaluated, and the results used to inform subsequent action.

**7.3** If retaining any significant place or part of a place is not reasonably practicable, its potential to inform us about the past should be exploited. This involves the recovery of information through prior investigation, followed by analysis, archiving and dissemination of the results at a standard appropriate to its significance.

**7.4** Where such loss is deliberate, the costs of this work should normally be borne by those who initiate the change.

# NOTES

# OUR QUESTIONS

**For ease of reference, the questions we have asked about each section of the *Principles* are summarised below:**

**Q.1a** Are we right to define the historic environment in these broad terms – as being everywhere and not just confined to specifically designated places?

**Q.1b** Do you agree that the historic environment is valuable for a range of reasons – and that it is a resource in which everyone has an interest?

**Q.2a** Is it right that society should expect change to sustain – and preferably enhance – the cultural and natural heritage values of the places affected by that change?

**Q.2b** Do you agree that communities have a legitimate interest in what happens to places they value – regardless of who actually owns them?

**Q.3a** Do you agree that everyone should be able to contribute to decisions about the management of the historic environment – and are there limits to their right to do so?

**Q.3b** Our assertion that practitioners should communicate their knowledge sounds like common sense – but does it raise significant practical or ethical issues?

**Q.4a** Do you agree that the significance of a place is the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it?

**Q.4b** Does Principle 4.3 provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of significance?

**Q.5a** Do you agree that conservation is about managing change in ways that best sustain and, whenever possible, enhance the values of a place?

**Q.5b** Are we correct in our argument that irreversible intervention may be justified if it helps to reveal the values of a significant place, or sustain them for the future?

**Q.6a** Have we correctly stated the factors that need to be balanced when making decisions about change that could harm the significance of a place?

**Q.6b** Are we right in saying that the weight given to heritage values should be proportionate to their significance to society?

**Q.7a** Do you agree that the loss of all or part of a significant place should be preceded by investigation and recording?

**Q.7b** Do you accept that this work should be the responsibility of those who are initiating the change – a principle established in archaeology by PPG 16 (DoE 1990)?

**Finally, there are two over-arching questions that we would like to ask you:**

**Q.8** Do the *Principles* reflect an appropriate balance between the public interest in the historic environment and private property rights?

**Q.9** Are the *Principles* comprehensive – have we left anything out?

# HOW TO RESPOND

**Consultees are invited to consider the *Conservation Principles* and respond to the consultation questions listed on page 35. Please identify clearly the question number(s) to which you are responding. We welcome any other comments on the *Conservation Principles*.**

Your responses should be sent to Sally Embree by 21 March 2006.  
Email address: [conservationprinciples@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:conservationprinciples@english-heritage.org.uk)

Or by post to:  
Conservation Principles  
Conservation Department  
English Heritage  
23 Savile Row  
London  
W1S 2ET

A copy of the consultation document and details of how to respond can also be found at the English Heritage website at: [www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationprinciples](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationprinciples)

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all responses. If you do not receive an acknowledgment within 15 working days, please call us on 020 7973 3265 to check that your contribution has been received.

All information in responses, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If a correspondent requests confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed and will only be possible if considered appropriate under the legislation. Any such request should explain why confidentiality is necessary. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be considered as such a request unless you specifically include a request, with an explanation, in the main text of your response.

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