



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

VALUING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Scottish Planning Policy (2014):

Planning policy for valuing the historic environment should:

- *promote the care and protection of the designated and non-designated historic environment (including individual assets, related settings and the wider cultural landscape) and its contribution to sense of place, cultural identity, social well-being, economic growth, civic participation and lifelong learning; and*
- *enable positive change in the historic environment which is informed by a clear understanding of the importance of the heritage assets affected and ensure their future use. Change should be sensitively managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the fabric and setting of the asset, and ensure that its special characteristics are protected conserved or enhanced.*

Development plans (and supplementary guidance) should provide a framework for protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing all elements of the historic environment including designating and reviewing existing and potential conservation areas. This should be supported by Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

Decisions on the siting and design of development should take account of all aspects of the historic environment, the protection afforded to specific designations; and the policies in place to protect them. This includes Listed Buildings; Conservation Areas; Scheduled Monuments; Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes; Historic Battlefields; Historic Marine Protected Areas; World Heritage Sites; Archaeology and other non-designated historic environment assets.

What has changed since 2014?

- The historic environment policies in SPP were written at a time when there was a separate policy for the historic environment known as the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) which had been co-ordinated by Historic Scotland.
- Our Place in Time – The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland¹ (OPIT) was also produced in 2014 as a framework for wider stakeholder collaboration with four strategic priorities and a range of coordinated actions and measures for the sector.
- Following the creation of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) on 1 October 2015 as the lead public body for the historic environment in Scotland, the Scottish Government's Planning Decisions branch became responsible for administering Scottish Ministers responsibilities in a number of historic environment areas. This includes handling notified Listed Building Consents, Conservation Area

¹ [Our Place in Time](#)

Consents and Scheduled Monument Consents. The functions and process of HES are set out in Historic Environment Scotland Circular: Regulation and Procedures².

- At this time of transition the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement 2016 (HESPS) was produced by HES as an interim policy statement and replaced SHEP.
- This has now been replaced with the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS³) which was adopted on 1 May 2019. It is a policy statement directing decision making that affects the historic environment. It is non-statutory. It sets out a series of principles and policies for the recognition, care and sustainable management of the historic environment and aligns with the vision and aims of OPIT. It is relevant to a wide range of decision making at national and local levels.
- Research undertaken by Ironside Farrar on the adoption of Scottish Planning Policy in local development plans⁴ confirmed effective coverage of SPP's historic environment policies across LDPs although there were occasional instances of adaptation to meet local circumstances. The research concluded that the existing policy works well for plan making purposes as they provides a clear list of considerations that should be covered by local policy. For Development Management purposes the policy provides a good balance between the conservation of historic buildings and locations and the need to promote economic development. The policy could provide more clarity on battlefield and archaeological sites, but the fact that key agencies like Historic Environment Scotland provide additional detailed guidance means this policy is potentially superseded. Archaeological studies are difficult to apply due to resourcing issues in smaller localities. Flexibility was not deemed as suitable for this policy to ensure historically important assets are preserved but the right balance should be sought in areas of high sensitivity.

Proposed key objective of NPF4: To support the understanding, protection and importance of the historic environment so that the cultural, social, environmental and economic value of our heritage continues to contribute to Scotland's well-being.

Issues to consider:

- Are existing policies sufficient to safeguard Scotland's valuable historic environment assets and to manage potential conflicts with other interests?
- If not, what changes are needed?
- How can NPF4 best complement existing historic environmental legislation, strategies and guidance, including that from other national bodies?

² [Historic Environment Scotland Circular: Regulations and Procedures](#)

³ [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland \(HEPS\)](#)

⁴ [Adoption of Scottish planning policy in local development plans](#)

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