2010

Understanding Place

Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Contents

Historic Area Assessment

Historic Area Assessment (HAA) is an important and practical tool for the informed management of the historic environment, and forms one of a number of approaches to understanding the historic environment at area scale, commonly grouped under the heading 'historic characterisation'. It has been developed to meet the particular needs of places or landscapes in which the built environment exerts a defining influence, but the underlying principles may be extended to all areas of the historic environment. The approach is intended to assist planners, historic environment specialists, communities, developers and others in evaluating the historic environment by understanding how the past is encapsulated in today's landscape, explaining why it has assumed its present form and distinguishing its more significant elements. This approach encourages a definition of the character of the area under review, and helps to address issues that may threaten to change that character. By providing a firm evidence base it assists in the formulation of plans at both local and strategic levels, as well as enabling informed decision making on proposals ranging from new developments and regeneration schemes to programmes of ongoing environmental improvement or maintenance.

Key benefits

A Historic Area Assessment will:

- provide a deeper understanding of the historical development of an area;
- document the survival and significance of its stock of historic buildings and structures, its open spaces and other landscape features, and provide a clearer sense of the area's archaeological potential;
- identify and describe 'character areas', assess their relative historic and architectural importance, and provide an evidence base for the retention of distinctive character;
- inform the production and implementation of 'master plans', Local Development Frameworks (including Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents) and Strategic Planning Frameworks;
- act as a vehicle for public participation in the management of the historic environment, broaden public interest and encourage stewardship;
- draw attention to those areas where heritage-led regeneration would be an appropriate response, to those that could accommodate more substantial change and to those suitable for wholesale redevelopment;
- suggest where grant-aid or other incentives could be targeted most beneficially;
- highlight where heritage protection (in the form of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and registered battlefields) is strongest, and where it is weakest and may need strengthening through new or revised designations;
- identify assets suitable for inclusion in a Local List, giving them the status of a 'material consideration' when planning decisions are determined, or meriting the formulation of specific Development Plan Policies;
- and indicate where more detailed or contextual research would be beneficial by drawing attention to little understood or undervalued areas or themes.

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the document

1.1.1 England's rich and varied historic places and landscapes, both urban and rural, help to sustain communities, providing livelihoods for many and pleasure to millions, either as residents or visitors. Identifying and understanding their particular qualities, and what these add to our lives, is central to our engagement with our history and culture (Fig 1).

1.1.2 The term 'historic area' is used in this document to describe any more or less extensive geographical entity viewed from a historical standpoint. A historic area can be a place, settlement, neighbourhood or landscape, an area enclosed by physical, administrative or property boundaries, whether existing or historic, or an area defined simply for the purposes of study.

1.1.3 This guidance document offers advice on how to undertake assessments of historic areas – for a number of purposes and in a number of circumstances, but always with the objective of defining and explaining the character of a place and defining its significance. The Introduction sets out the principles underlying Historic Area Assessments (HAAs) and explains how they relate to other approaches to the understanding of historic areas. Sections 2–5 explain the issues underlying area assessments and how to carry them out at various levels of resolution; they will be most directly relevant to those undertaking or commissioning HAAs (section 4 is aimed primarily at practitioners). Three levels of HAA are defined in section 3 and the methods and outcomes are illustrated by a series of case studies throughout the document.

1.1.4 The guidance is intended to assist the following groups in commissioning and undertaking Historic Area Assessments:

- local authority planners and historic environment specialists (a quick reference guide aimed particularly at these groups is also available: *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments in a planning and development context*);[1]
- local groups and communities;
- historic environment consultants and contractors;
- regeneration and housing market renewal partnerships;
- housing growth agencies;
- developers;
- and owners of extensive heritage assets (eg historic estates).

1.2 Legislation and policy

1.2.1 The recognition of historic areas in English planning law dates from the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, under which local authorities were granted powers to designate Conservation Areas. These powers were reaffirmed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990, which requires local planning authorities to identify areas of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and then to pay 'special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of those areas'. English Heritage's *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (2006) explains how they relate to the Spatial Planning System (SPS) introduced by the 2004 Planning and Compensation Act. The Act sets out the legislative requirements for delivering place shaping through policy making at both regional and local levels. PPS 11 (at the regional level) and PPS 12 (at the local level) provide the mechanism for this delivery. The procedures require evidence gathering to produce policies focused on realising the community vision for the area. Those proposing major developments are also expected to include baseline evidence on the nature of the area so that decision makers can assess the likely impact of the proposals.

1.2.2 The guidance presented here complements the government's Planning Policy Statement 5, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, and the associated *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, issued jointly by CLG and DCMS in March 2010 in consultation with English Heritage. In particular, Historic Area Assessments support the delivery of the following government policies aimed at integrating historic environment concerns within the wider planning process:

- Evidence base for plan-making
- Regional and local planning approaches
- Monitoring indicators

Additionally, in certain circumstances an HAA (often on a small scale) may form an important component of evidence used to assess a proposal affecting an individual heritage asset, thereby supporting the following policies:

- Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets
- Additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset

1.2.3 This guidance observes the general conservation philosophy set out in English Heritage's *Conservation Principles*.[2] It complements and expands upon previously published and forthcoming guidance,

Fig 1 Backbarrow, Cumbria: The interaction of natural landforms and human activity produces richly varied and distinctive landscapes. Understanding the complex forces that shaped them, and their potential to enhance the quality of life, is crucial to effective management (EH/Adam Menuge; DP072357).

all of which is (or will be) available at www.english-heritage.org.uk/Publications:

- *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, 2005)
- *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (English Heritage, 2006)
- *Character and Identity: townscape and heritage appraisals in Housing Market Renewal Areas* (English Heritage and CABE 2008)
- *Capitalising on the Inherited Landscape: an introduction to historic characterisation for masterplanning* (Homes and Communities Agency and English Heritage 2009)
- *Characterisation and Spatial Planning* (English Heritage forthcoming)

Further information on the range of approaches to the understanding of places and historic areas can be found in an explanatory leaflet, *Understanding Place: an introduction*.[3]

1.2.4 There is widespread acceptance that the historic environment is ubiquitous, not confined to a series of discrete 'monuments', and the Government's ratification of the European Landscape Convention in 2007 has entrenched this recognition more firmly in Government policy. *Power of Place* (2000), published by English Heritage on behalf of the historic environment sector, stressed the positive impact of local and 'ordinary' heritage – what might be termed the buildings and spaces in between 'monuments' – on the quality of people's lives and its central role in constructing local identity.

1.2.5 For some years, therefore, English Heritage policy has promoted the gathering of baseline evidence ahead of major development or regeneration initiatives (Fig 2).[4] Recent broad-ranging regional planning in the south-east of England – in the Thames Gateway, the M11 corridor and the Milton Keynes growth point – as part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan prompted high-level historic characterisation exercises as a means of identifying significant elements of the historic landscape to guide and inform the management of change and to satisfy the requirement for places that 'belong' in their proposed setting.[5] A comparable approach has been advocated with regard to government proposals for Eco Towns.

1.2.6 At a much more local level, the Government's Housing Market Renewal Initiative (Pathfinder) proposed radical change to address problems of low-demand housing in northern and midland cities. English Heritage's response urged – for example through the position statement on *Low Demand Housing* (2004)[6] – that the architectural and historic significance of target areas (many of them highly valued by the local community, despite suffering severe economic and environmental losses) needed to be assessed before redevelopment master plans were formulated in detail. By this means, it was argued, buildings or neighbourhoods of architectural merit or historic interest could be identified and become part of 'the solution'.

1.2.7 In acknowledging the positive role played by the wider historic environment there is also a recognition that community views should be factored into the planning and decision-making process. Planning Policy Statement 12 sets out the consultation expectations placed on planning authorities (see www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps12lsp). General guidelines on how to conduct public consultations are set out in the government's *Code of Practice on Consultation* (July 2008; see www.bre.berr.gov.uk). Useful information on the 'Duty to Involve', which came into force on 1 April 2009, is available in a document titled *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities: Statutory Guidance* (July 2008; see www.communities.gov.uk). Its aim is to increase the benefits of community engagement in local decision making.

1.2.8 The ideal to be aimed for is the bringing together of a range of expert and community views to produce a fully integrated understanding of areas, evaluating the built environment, public realm and designed landscapes, and assessing archaeological value, actual and potential. The ongoing process of Heritage Protection Reform seeks to underpin just such an inclusive view of the historic environment, in which the setting and local context of individual 'heritage assets' will often require area-based evaluation.[7]

Fig 2 Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney: Pressure on the historic environment – whether from development or neglect – creates a need for an understanding of what is important and why. 10 Great Eastern Street was built in 1879 shortly after the road was laid out; the disused viaduct of the North London Line passes behind, and beyond lie the remains of the Bishopsgate Goods Station (EH/Derek Kendall; AA034919).

1.3 Definition: what are Historic Area Assessments?

1.3.1 A number of methods, broadly grouped under the heading 'historic characterisation', are currently used to study and characterise historic areas (*see* section 1.5). The present document describes an approach that shares aspects of these techniques but that also has a number of distinctive ingredients and emphases. 'Historic Area Assessment' (HAA) is therefore used to describe a method of studying historic landscapes of widely different types for a variety of purposes, including education and academic study, but most often to inform the management of change. The principal focus of an HAA is generally on the historic built environment, encompassing both buildings themselves and the elements of the landscape – street

and road patterns, boundaries, open spaces – that provide their setting, but it should also have regard to existing knowledge of buried or upstanding archaeological remains in the locality, especially where these have a bearing on the historic evolution of a place. While its raw materials are the individual features or building blocks of the landscape, an HAA must at some level engage with the place or area as a complex whole – as a web of relationships, even as a collective artefact. It differs from most other forms of historic characterisation in the weight accorded to field observation and in its emphasis on understanding and explaining observed character, generally at a higher level of definition.

1.3.2 A Historic Area Assessment is a useful method of understanding, within a short space of time, the heritage interest of a fairly small area or neighbourhood – such as a small town, a suburb or a village. Covering the area methodically and combining this with an analysis of historic maps, one can gain a sense of how and why a place has come to look the way it does; of the relationships of buildings to open spaces, and of residential areas to commercial or civic centres; the evolution of transport infrastructure; views in and out of confined spaces; building scale, type, materials, current use, and other related factors. This approach encourages a definition of the strongest aspect of the character of the area under review, and helps to address issues that may threaten to change that character. Issues that have achieved prominence in recent years include the infilling of vacant sites, new development on more generous plots in residential suburbs (sometimes called 'garden-grabbing'), and the redundancy of particular building types. Out of an assessment of a particular area, more general planning issues concerning sustainability, density, high-quality design for new build, permeability, access, transport, the appearance of the public realm, the balance of 'hard' and 'soft' elements of the environment, and so on, will emerge.

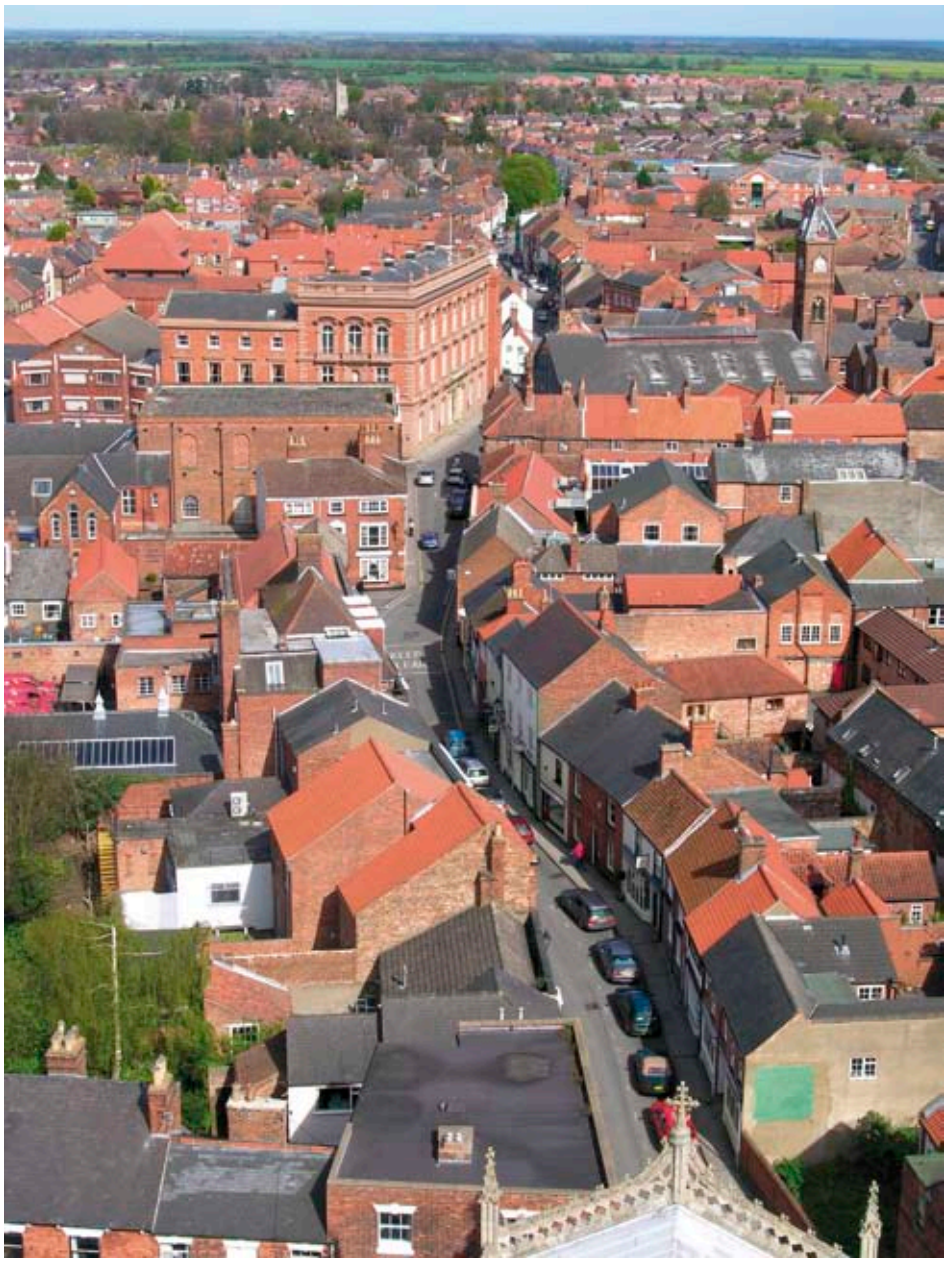


Fig 3 Louth, Lincolnshire: Almost any snapshot of the historic environment poses questions about how it assumed its present form, and how it differs from comparable areas elsewhere. (EH/Adam Menuge; DP072360).

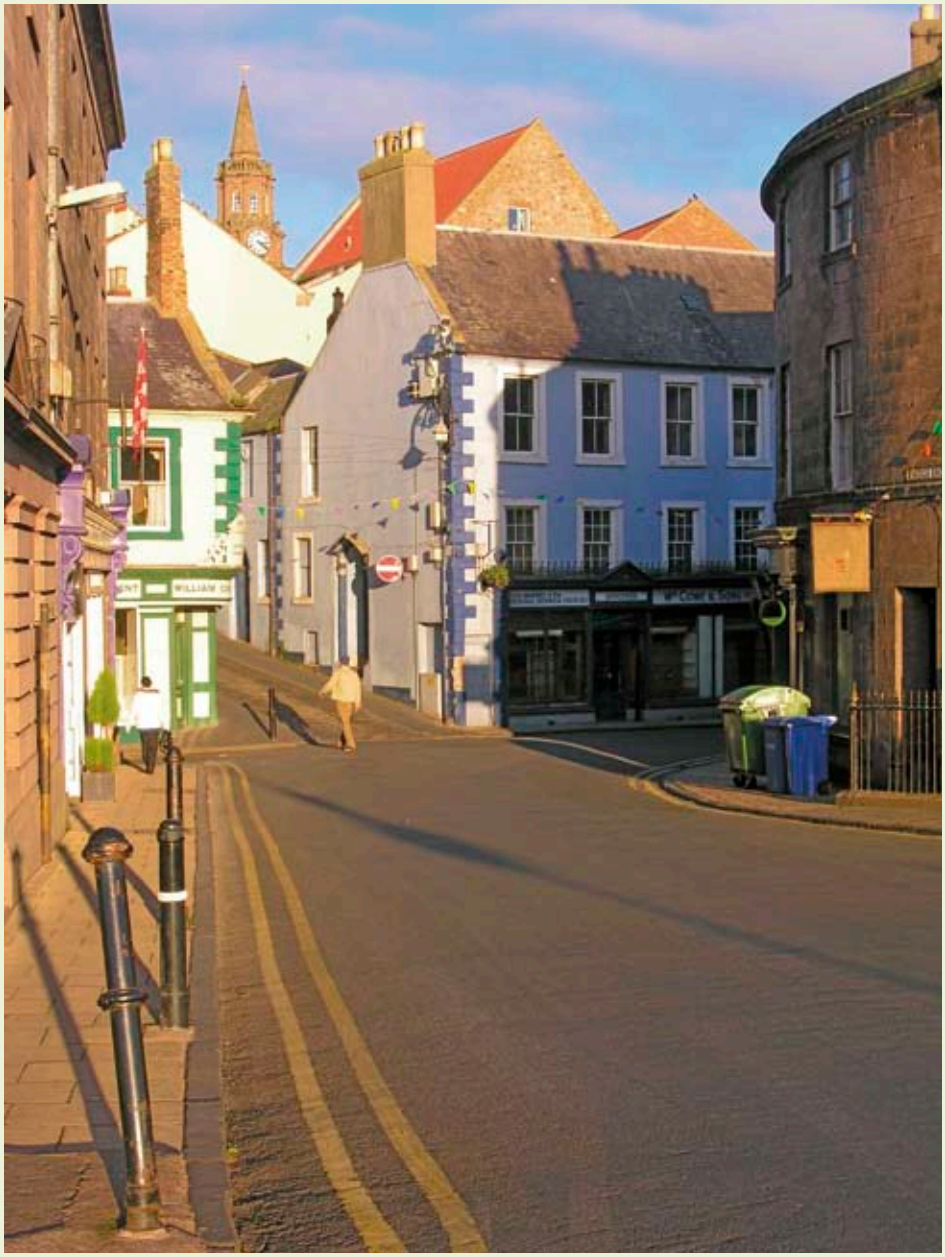
1.4 Principles and purpose

1.4.1 We all live in a historic environment, whether in an ancient cathedral city, a rural landscape fashioned in the enclosure period or a post-war suburban housing estate. Even a housing development built within the last few years may preserve in its boundaries, and sometimes in earthworks, trees or other features, vestiges of a historic landscape. The places where we live and work have been shaped by complex human forces acting on the natural environment, and our world is made up of innumerable unique and interlinked landscapes, often built up layer by layer over many centuries, that tell the particular story of each locality.[8] England is renowned for containing great diversity within a relatively small country: heavily industrialised urban areas, historic market towns, vast suburbs surrounding our cities, farming landscapes, historic estates, upland, lowland and the coast, all existing within easy reach of one another. These broad contrasts are striking, but variety and unique character are present at more intimate local levels as well. Each village or town has a distinct regional identity, but it will also be special in itself, with a particular combination of local and regional materials and features impressed upon the natural landscape. If we look more closely, the different parts of these settlements show a similar mixture of shared characteristics and particular variations. The character of a place, therefore, is a mixture of what places share with others and of what makes them distinct.

1.4.2 An understanding of the character of historic areas is important to us, whether as residents, visitors, planners or developers. What we see today is the result of a centuries-long process of evolution, a process dictated in part by changes in natural conditions but much more immediately and obviously by human effort, adding, adapting and replacing (Fig 3). The landscape of historic areas is, therefore, a powerful expression of our culture and history, it shows how society has evolved, and its present form provides a focus around which communities define their identity.

Case study: Berwick-upon-Tweed

Berwick is a historic border town of great distinction, important for its medieval and Elizabethan ramparts, such buildings as its Commonwealth-era church and early 18th-century barracks, and a streetscape composed largely of 18th and early-19th-century houses. Two satellite settlements, Tweedmouth and Spittal, have distinctive though less well-known histories in which fishing and other industries bulk large. All three settlements have Conservation Areas. By national standards the economy of the area has not performed well in recent decades and growing levels of migration by the town's young people have caused mounting concern. By 2005 Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal stood on the brink of major change, originating partly in the regeneration efforts of the local authority and its regional partners, and partly in growing commercial interest in the development of waterfront sites. It was important therefore to assess the character and significance of the local historic environment, and to identify any gaps in knowledge, before development and regeneration plans progressed further.



The initial assessment by English Heritage took the form of rapid fieldwork conducted by two investigators over four days and ranging across the whole of the three settlements as they existed *c* 1920; for speed, outlying areas overwhelmingly of later date were not inspected. The fieldwork was supplemented by limited research in documentary sources – principally maps. The resulting report,[9] completed in about six weeks, identified the main lines of historical and architectural development, the forces helping to shape particular areas, and the resulting architectural and landscape character. The content of the report largely comprised accounts of 20 'historic character areas', which provide a key to understanding the diversity and distinctiveness at the heart of Berwick's appeal.

The assessment was made available to master planners (commissioned by the local planning authority) in the early stages of their work. It also provided context and much relevant information for the North of England Civic Trust in the preparation of two Conservation Area Appraisals (Berwick and Tweedmouth) and management plans for all three conservation areas. Local people welcomed the study as offering a fresh perspective on the town's heritage, particularly with its attention to hitherto disregarded areas. It was the catalyst for the establishment of a local building recording group, prompted a reassessment of statutory designations, and, following further research, led to a publication, *Berwick-upon-Tweed: three places, two nations, one town*.[10]

1.4.3 Continuing change in the historic environment is as inevitable as the passing of time, and its effect is to destroy some things irreplaceably as well as to obscure or fragment other elements of the past. Often attention focuses on the threats to individual features, which may indeed be valuable in their own right. Frequently, however, the grouping or association of a number of buildings, a streetscape or a wider landscape is at least as important because it enables us to visualise the relationships between past activities or the structures of past societies. But if the inevitability of change is not in dispute, its direction can be controversial. The question that must be addressed in the management of change is the value that we, as a society, place on our environment. In managing assets that collectively we consider to be most precious, we will seek change that will be most beneficial in retaining, reinforcing or enhancing significance. Placing a value on parts of our environment is, of course, a highly contentious and difficult process, for it can involve a plurality of views, some in direct conflict with one another.[11] But the process of assessing significance is informed by understanding, which enables us to see how and why parts of our environment are important, for different reasons and from a range of perspectives. Appreciation and enjoyment of the historic environment,

no less than decision making concerning its future, benefit from a sound understanding of what we have.

1.5 Approaches to historic characterisation

1.5.1 Change to the historic environment can affect individual heritage assets, or whole areas. The methods of recording sites and buildings and of defining their significance have been developed to a high level of sophistication over recent decades.[12] Defining the significance of historic areas is less well developed as a discipline, but this approach has become increasingly important, not only in response to change, whether rapid and planned or slow and incremental, but also as a means of actively establishing local identity and of giving voice to a range of views on what is of value. This guidance document seeks to describe an approach to the assessment of historic areas that can be used for a number of purposes. These may be reactive in response to and as an influence on external proposals for change, or they may be proactive, making clear what is important and thereby enhancing understanding and enjoyment, while establishing the context for future change.

1.5.2 The developing study of historic areas has produced a number of distinct approaches in works on both rural and urban landscapes, each designed with particular purposes in mind.[13] By contrast early examples of heritage assessments undertaken in anticipation of large-scale change focused on the identification of individual buildings and sites of significance rather than on whole landscapes.[14] More recent responses have placed a much greater emphasis on defining the broader character of landscapes with a view to retaining, or to managing the evolution of, this character (Fig 4). The main types of approach adopted are:

- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC): high-level; typically covering a whole county; principally map-based and highlighting historic land use; applicable to both rural and metropolitan landscapes; provides a descriptive historic interpretation of landscape character, not focused on relative judgements of value, and suitable for the strategic management of change, especially within spatial planning.[15]
- Extensive Urban Survey (EUS): assesses smaller towns on a county-by-county basis, principally through an analysis of existing archaeological, topographical and historic sources; early examples focused on buried archaeological remains, on topographical evolution and (in some cases) on industrial archaeology; more recent examples also characterise the present-day urban landscape; intended to highlight areas of sensitivity, assist in planning and target future research.[16]
- Historic Area Assessment (HAA): typically best adapted to whole settlements or parts of large ones; applicable to both designated and undesignated areas; makes extensive use of field evidence; sets out to explain as well as to describe, and to define significance; intended to guide planning and decision making at the small and medium scale.
- Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA): addresses the particular needs of England's more than 9,000 designated conservation areas, explaining the rationale behind their selection and summarising their chief characteristics and significance; draws extensively on field observation and incorporates some form of Historic Area Assessment; involves the canvassing of local views; underpins policies to 'preserve and enhance'.[17]
- Conservation Management Plan (or equivalent): forms an important tool for understanding, planning and managing large sites, such as historic parks and gardens.[18] Management programmes are usually set out for each distinct character area of the site, as informed by an appraisal similar to a Historic Area Assessment.

1.5.3 This guidance on Historic Area Assessment therefore forms part of a spectrum of approaches to the historic

Fig 4 Swaledale, North Yorkshire: Agricultural landscapes demonstrate clearly the importance of a holistic approach to the historic environment. Land use, field systems and buildings are closely interlinked and make little sense in isolation (EH/Adam Menuge; DP072361).

Case study: Queenborough and Rushenden, Kent (Thames Gateway)

This Historic Area Assessment[20] was undertaken for the South-East Region of English Heritage in order to inform development proposals at Queenborough and its neighbouring residential suburb Rushenden. Situated on the Isle of Sheppey off the north Kent coast, close to extensive marshland of both historic and nature conservation interest, Queenborough and Rushenden are likely to see considerable housing growth and other changes in coming years as part of the regeneration of the Thames Gateway. A master plan is being formulated in accordance with the Development Framework for Queenborough and the Swale Borough Local Plan.

The Queenborough study sets out the story of this small town's development, highlighting the significant buildings, sites and areas. Its principal aim is to inform the debate about the future of Queenborough and Rushenden. The document is intended for all those – master planners, policy makers, regeneration agencies, local authority conservation officers, planners, developers and their architects – who stand to benefit from a deeper understanding of the area's history and character. It is also intended to be of use to the local community and to all who have an interest in the town and its future. By highlighting significant, sensitive and designated areas the report can be used as a planning tool to manage change within the historic environment, and to urge that investment in historic assets contributes directly to the wider benefits of regeneration. The concluding section of the assessment looks at the impact of new areas of development on the most sensitive parts of the town; it is hoped that this conservation element may help in considering options for renewal.

Rummey Design Associates refer to the Queenborough Historic Area Appraisal in their master plan for the town, proposing for example that the grain of the historic landscape, which is powerfully influenced by such features as passages linking the High Street with the creek, should be reflected in the areas of proposed new development. English Heritage continues to comment on aspects of the developing master plan, particularly on the scale of proposed new creek-side development, and the importance of linking the residential suburb of Rushenden with Queenborough rather than further isolating it.

(EH/Derek Kendall DP018252)

environment at large. It complements our earlier advice on conservation areas, widening its application to the consideration of any historic area or place, whether intended to lead to designation or not, and providing a more detailed level of guidance on purpose and methods. It also describes an approach which, while sharing some of the same techniques – such as the study of historic maps – employed by HLC, places greater emphasis on observation of field evidence and the use of a range of documentary sources, allowing a much more detailed and nuanced analysis of both landscape and built forms.

1.6 When should Historic Area Assessments be undertaken?

Historic Area Assessments are applicable to a wide range of circumstances. Typically they are used to gain an overview of the characteristics and significance of small

and medium-sized settlements, or parts of settlements such as a suburb, a neighbourhood, a conservation area, a substantial housing development or a country house estate, but they can also be applied to areas of more mixed character, such as areas of settlement interspersed by countryside. The approach can make a valuable contribution to large-scale housing growth, regeneration and other spatial planning initiatives by selectively examining those parts of a wide area where the need for understanding is most acute. HAAs will frequently be requested as a response to specific proposals for change, but there is much to be said for undertaking assessments proactively.

1.6.1 Historic Area Assessments are applicable to a wide range of historic landscape types, especially

- small and medium-sized towns;
- suburbs;
- villages and hamlets;
- historic town centres and central business districts;
- industrial quarters and ports;
- historic country house and institutional estates;
- and linear historic entities such as canals and railways.

1.6.2 The circumstances in which Historic Area Assessments might be called for vary widely, and in recent years different levels of assessment have been developed, designed to meet particular needs (*see* section 3). They will be especially valuable in the context of:

- the formulation of master plans, Area Action Plans, Heritage Partnership Agreements, and similar schemes;
- the early planning stages of Housing Growth Areas, Growth Points, Eco Towns and regeneration schemes (including Housing Market Renewal Initiatives);
- anticipated or proposed large-scale redevelopment, including major infrastructure projects;
- anticipated designation of conservation areas;
- schemes for the restoration of historic estates, parks and gardens;
- and proposals affecting an individual heritage asset the setting or local context of which requires further understanding.[19]

1.6.3 In some of the circumstances outlined above HAAs can be characterised as 'reactive', but where resources permit they can also (and often to advantage) be undertaken where specific development proposals are not the driving force. Procuring an HAA at the earliest stages of planning, in the production, for example, of a master plan or of an Area Action Plan, will ensure that the findings relating to the significance of the historic environment can shape later, more detailed, stages of planning by providing a strong evidence base.

The Housing Market Renewal Initiative announced by Government in 2003 is a 15-year programme to regenerate substantial parts of Northern and Midland England where local economies have faltered, resulting in high levels of vacant housing and related social problems. Most of the target areas were dominated by 19th- or 20th-century housing; heritage designations were few and the value of the built environment was uncertain. But the scale of the proposed changes and the prospect of prompt implementation called for a quick response. English Heritage opted to test the value and significance of a number of areas and in the process to develop a methodology suitable for assessing similarly affected areas elsewhere. Anfield and Breckfield, an inner Liverpool suburb long beset by economic decline, was selected for Rapid Assessment. Other parts of Merseyside were examined more summarily to produce Outline Assessments (*see* separate text boxes on Anfield and on Tranmere.

1.6.4 In broad terms an HAA is likely to be beneficial whenever there is a need to define and evaluate the historic environment of a place or area, sometimes alongside a range of other objectives. For example, the production by local communities of Parish Plans, Village Design Statements and Town Design Statements would typically benefit from the incorporation of an area assessment. Such documents capture the values held by local people about their environment and can be used to steer change in directions that enhance the environment, both natural and historic.[21]

1.6.5 An HAA may also be valuable when a complex site, or geographical grouping of sites – whether in single or in multiple ownership – is considered for a Heritage Partnership Agreement (HPA). HPAs are management agreements that facilitate the medium to long-term management of historic assets by mutual agreement among relevant parties. They offer a degree of prior agreement for certain activities, giving partners the benefit of medium-term clarity, mutual understanding and consistency of approach over time and geographical area. HPAs can be applied to assets across the historic environment where it is likely that increased management efficiencies can be achieved. In preparing or implementing an HPA, the existence of an HAA will highlight areas of significance not already recognised through designations, encouraging best practice in the management and use of the site. HPAs are purely voluntary agreements but this does not prevent them from extending to the production of an HAA, providing the necessary resources can be found.

2 Key Issues

This section develops approaches to the broad issues identified in the Introduction, offering guidance on the framing of Historic Area Assessments in ways that meet modern planning and heritage protection needs.

2.1 Drawing boundaries

2.1.1 In order to keep the HAA focused and manageable it is important that appropriate boundaries are established. Too large an area will entail considerable extra work and cost; too small an area may restrict the range of insights to be gained and may prevent them from being contextualised adequately.

2.1.2 Sometimes boundaries may be implicit in the proposals that prompt the assessment; at other times current administrative boundaries may be proposed. In either case the relevance of such boundaries should always be examined critically. Where the administrative boundaries are of recent creation it is likely that the development of the area has been shaped much more profoundly by historic boundaries that are now defunct. Sometimes underlying landforms or patterns of landownership have exerted a more decisive influence on an area's development than any administrative boundaries. Therefore, an initial task of the assessment will be the validation of any boundaries that have been proposed and, where necessary, their modification. Where Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) or Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) has already been undertaken this may provide a useful overview of the area or of its wider context.

2.1.3 In all cases it is nevertheless important to treat boundaries as permeable. Areas do not develop in isolation, and thought must always be given to significant relationships with places and events outside the area selected or defined.

2.2 Defining character

2.2.1 Areas may be chosen for assessment because they are already deemed to have a distinctive character potentially worth preserving or enhancing – as for example when a Conservation Area Appraisal is undertaken. Others may be chosen precisely to determine whether or not this is the case. Depending on the size of the area, it may be helpful to regard it as being made up of a series of 'character areas', each exhibiting markedly or subtly different characteristics. These variations may be the expression of different periods of history or of different patterns of ownership, or they may reflect the operation of different socio-economic forces in the remote or recent past. Identifying these character areas, and describing their attributes, helps to sharpen our sense of the qualities that make places distinctive, and thus enhances our ability to safeguard distinctiveness when making decisions that will affect an area's future.

Case study: South Shoreditch

South Shoreditch lies at the heart of what is known in London development contexts as the 'City fringe', the future of which is a major public policy issue for Londoners. English Heritage, in partnership with the London Borough of Hackney and the Greater London Authority, has explored co-ordinated approaches to planning in South Shoreditch. To inform the debate English Heritage carried out a detailed assessment of the area, the dominant and distinctive character of which derives from its history as a major centre of the furniture trade from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century. The assessment traced the development of the area, identifying workshops, showrooms and other buildings of historic or architectural interest.

The assessment resulted in a small number of new designations and, importantly, the information helped to frame new conservation policies, which now underpin the South Shoreditch Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The assessment identified a number of buildings of either local significance or townscape merit that contribute to the overall quality of the area. The South Shoreditch SPD provides detailed guidance for conservation and design issues affecting these buildings, and seeks to protect plot patterns, historic street layout and local views. It includes criteria relating to the design quality of materials, scale and relationship to context – issues that had been identified in the assessment. The SPD aims to achieve a balance by encouraging high-quality, large-scale development on the edge of the City areas, while also ensuring that development within conservation areas reflects the prevailing scale, character and form of the furniture trade's architectural legacy. As the resulting publication in English Heritage's Informed Conservation series put it, these policies aim to 'ensure that these areas retain the essential character that makes them such attractive places in which to live and work.'[22]

(EH/Derek Kendall AA034929)

Fig 5 Berwick-upon-Tweed: The scale and density of the historic environment, and the degree to which we move and look freely within it or are restricted to prescribed routes and viewpoints, have a powerful impact on our sense of place (EH/Adam Menuge; DP072359).

2.2.2 Character in the historic environment is a subtle compound of many different ingredients (Fig 5). To varying degrees it can be said to embrace all the senses, though it is generally the visual sense that dominates our impressions. The main visual characteristics of an area are intimately linked, but may be summarised under the following broad headings:

- Underlying landscape features: geology, relief, soil, aspect and drainage
- Layout: parcel (field or plot) size, shape and land use; regularity and density of street pattern and other communications; positioning of buildings in relation to plots and sight-lines; building scale and density, and their relationship to street width; and the size, frequency and formality of the open space
- Buildings: functional types; morphology, including plan-forms and roof shapes; architectural styles, features and motifs; prevalent building materials and colour palette
- Designed landscapes, green spaces and public realm: ornamental structures, earthworks, sculpture and water features; planting schemes (public and private); naturally occurring trees and vegetation; physical boundaries (eg walls, hedges, railings); surfaces (eg roads, alleys, forecourts and yards); street and park furniture

2.2.3 These essentially static visual attributes are supplemented or modified by a range of other factors derived largely from movement, sounds and smells, including such things as traffic (and traffic noise), the changing views opened up by moving through a landscape, perfumes arising from gardens and the smell of certain industrial processes or effluents (Fig 6). These attributes can have a profound influence on the way we experience places. Both diurnal and seasonal variations in character may also be important: a busy commercial centre may fall silent outside office hours; winter views can be obscured by summer foliage; a sea front vibrant in August may be battened down and deserted in January. Most characteristics, to whichever sense they appeal, are subject to change over time, and it may be necessary to identify key stages in an area's development and define its character at each stage.

2.2.4 The definition of character in the historic environment requires sensitivity to the range of influences listed above, though

Fig 6 Manningham, Bradford: A street of local shops in the suburb of Manningham. The vibrant awnings of the shop fronts and signwriting, the colours and smells of fresh produce and the sound of traffic dominate our senses to the exclusion, perhaps, of the street's modest architectural character. But to a visitor the uniform stone elevations of minor Victorian buildings, though commonplace in Bradford, may be striking (EH/Bob Skingle; DP071819).

not all of them will weigh equally in the final analysis. In some areas there will be a high degree of uniformity of character; in other areas diversity may itself be a distinctive quality worth highlighting (together with its parameters). It will frequently be possible to divide character areas into a series of more subtly differentiated sub-areas. Definition should be as precise and inclusive as possible, because it may be used as the basis for accepting or rejecting proposed changes to the area or to individual buildings. Such changes may have the inadvertent effect of eroding any characteristics that have been overlooked even while reinforcing those that have been identified.

2.2.5 Character areas imply the drawing of boundaries separating one area from another. These boundaries may be clear-cut in some places (for example where a large river, railway embankment or other 'impermeable' barrier has impeded development) but soft edged in other cases. If these subtleties cannot be expressed cartographically, then attention must be drawn to them in the written report. Boundaries should not be imposed artificially simply because the exercise appears to call for them.

2.2.6 The definition of character areas can be a useful exercise in its own right, codifying a disparate series of observations or giving an objective basis for instinctive feelings. It has the additional value for Historic Area Assessments, however, that it poses a series of fundamental questions:

- When did the area acquire its present dominant character?
- What were the principal influences on the formation of its character?
- Why does the area differ from neighbouring areas?
- Why does the area's character differ from that of another area of ostensibly similar type (for example, two areas of working-class by-law housing)?

2.3 Clarifying historical and architectural development

2.3.1 Historic Area Assessments will be most effective when they are informed by an appropriate series of research questions. These will focus attention on what makes the area special, how it has acquired these characteristics and how it compares with other areas. The aim should be to identify and explain the patterns observed in the historic environment and to draw attention to the connections and contrasts between its various elements.

2.3.2 The aim should be to produce a narrative of the area's development, clearly identifying the factors driving and constraining change, and adequately explaining the varied form of the area. Different areas will raise different issues, but the following research questions will probably be found to be generally applicable and may help to shape the final report (the extent to which each point can be developed will depend on the level of survey adopted – *see* section 3.5 for illustrative examples):

- **What are the earliest observable elements in the historic landscape?** Did they, or other elements now lost, or topographical features, shape or constrain the subsequent development of the area? What is the likely below-ground archaeological potential of the area?
- **When and why did the area develop and what are the principal stages in its development?** What were the main drivers behind development? How was it organised or financed? Was an administrative framework or a particular pattern of ownership an influential factor and can the individuals or bodies responsible be identified? Did developing communications within the area or on its margins exert a significant influence on the area's evolution? What other changes outside the area shaped its development?
- **How is the area laid out (street pattern, size and distribution of plots, scale and distribution of open spaces, and other divisions)?** Did its layout evolve? How, when and why? What is the typical unit of development and what exceptions can be identified? Did the typical unit change over time? Were individual developments completed in accordance with initial intentions or were these intentions modified or abandoned? Were the social, economic or other aspirations of developers and builders realised? Can the impact of building cycles or of wider economic fluctuations be detected?
- **What kinds of building (domestic, agricultural, commercial, industrial and so on) and open space were created in the area?** Were different building types or functions located in recognisable zones? Did this pattern change over time? What evidence is there for contemporary employment within the area? What administrative buildings, churches and institutions were sited within the area? What services were provided (schools, shops, etc) and by whom? What provision was made for leisure (parks, sports facilities and the like) and by whom? How were these various amenities distributed within the area?
- **What was the social and economic character of the area?** Did this change over time? When, how, and why? Is there variety within the area? How important to residents was employment beyond the area's boundaries? To what extent did the provision of services and institutions render the area economically and culturally self-sufficient?
- **What is the architectural and landscape character of the area?** Which are its dominant components? What is the role of open spaces, and of natural and designed landscape features, in determining character? What is the range of building types? What range of forms occurs within a single building type? Which building materials are apparent? What changes in the nature of the building stock occurred over time? What explanations can be offered for any variety that exists? What type (or types) of landscape do the buildings and other features help to form?
- **How does this area compare with others near by, or with comparable areas elsewhere?** What reasons can be advanced to explain any differences? Which aspects of the area are representative of national trends and which may be regarded as typical of the region or locality? Which are distinctive or unique, and what reasons can be suggested for their occurrence?

2.3.3 HAAs will be most valuable when they not only reflect the latest thinking on the development of historic landscapes but also provide new insights that take their study forward. The process of assessment is analytical: description forms a part of the method, but it is a means to an end. So the strength of any assessment will be directly linked to the degree to which the character of an area is understood in the context of wider patterns, both historical and geographical. It is important that an assessment should comment on whether a landscape is typical of a period or place, or significantly different. This is not to imply that the typical is not significant: it can represent a social, economic, cultural or architectural development of great importance. The key to assessment is to make that link and to relate a particular area to wider patterns. It is quite possible that the study of an area for assessment purposes challenges received views about landscape development and about

Fig 7 Stanley Dock, Liverpool: Industrial landscapes in economic decline can attract hostility: they are 'blighted', 'unsightly', 'a blot on the landscape'. But the elemental power of the historic industrial environment is an imaginative resource that can be harnessed in the regeneration of such areas (© Elizabeth Green).

the relationship between aspects of a landscape, and such a discovery can act as a stimulus to refine the ways in which we understand the historic environment and approach its analysis.

2.4 Assessing condition, integrity and vulnerability

2.4.1 Observations on the general condition and integrity of an area give a sense of how robust or fragile the historic environment has become. They may also isolate particular areas of concern if further erosion of historic character is to be avoided: poor physical condition can be both a symptom and a cause of public disaffection with the environment (Fig 7). The resulting observations are likely to be non-technical and, where they touch on condition, should not be seen as a substitute for a full condition survey of individual buildings and landscapes, where necessary. Understanding the ingredients of historic character also helps to determine the vulnerability of an area to change or, alternatively, its capacity to absorb significant change, or certain kinds of change, without substantial detriment.

2.4.2 The following questions may be helpful in exploring these issues:

- What is the overall condition of the historic environment? Does it vary within the area?
- What has been lost (eg neighbourhoods, streets, significant buildings, distinctive landscape features, views, architectural details)?
- Which parts of the historic landscape retain a high degree of physical integrity and which have been extensively altered or fragmented?
- Do different building types display differential survival rates?
- Which surviving neighbourhoods, buildings or features particularly reflect the historic character of the area? Which are in good condition or could be refurbished? Are these valued by local people or by a wider public?
- What pressures for change, either active (eg redevelopment) or passive (eg neglect), can be identified in the area?
- Can the extent of vacant or at-risk properties be quantified?
- Which elements of the historic environment continue to fulfil the needs for which they were originally intended? Which are suitable for adaptive re-use? Which characteristics or features should schemes for re-use aim to retain or respect?
- What would be the consequences for the historic environment of demolition of parts of the historic fabric? Would neighbourhoods lose their integrity and therefore become more vulnerable? Would individual buildings be stripped of significance?

2.5 Identifying values

2.5.1 Underlying the process of Historic Area Assessment are values. No assessment can fail to reflect the outlook or intention of the person or persons who undertook the exercise, however even-handed the approach attempts to be. This is not something that detracts from the method, but rather one that enhances the process, provided that the approaches and arguments are set out clearly for critical scrutiny.

2.5.2 Historic environment scholarship and professional practice reflect a set of values in which ideas of rarity, representativeness, authenticity and aesthetic appeal all figure prominently. These values are enshrined in the system of statutory designations, which seeks to protect the most important aspects of our heritage. Refined over many years but always capable of evolving, these values command wide respect but they do not represent the whole spectrum of opinion touching the historic environment.

2.5.3 English Heritage promotes a values-based approach to significance (*see also* section 4.5) as set out in *Conservation Principles*, which identifies four broad groups of values through which a site or place can be interpreted: evidential, historical, communal and aesthetic.[23] These values broaden the way in which we define significance, enabling 'local values' to be set alongside the academic and expert views that dominate our system of formal protection of special places.

2.5.4 Designation is the most obvious expression of the way in which we value landscapes and their constituent parts. Conservation areas, as previously described, identify areas of special interest, and listed buildings and scheduled monuments are afforded statutory protection because of their national significance. Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and Registered Battlefields, are also deemed to be nationally significant. Many local authorities supplement these categories by the identification of additional buildings for inclusion in a Local List. This elevates them to the status of 'material considerations' in planning decisions, and Development Plan Policies can provide further protection. Areas can be protected through Supplementary Planning Documents.

2.5.5 Designation does not amount to a comprehensive definition of the historic environment, but draws attention to those parts judged to be of special significance

Fig 8 Queenborough, Kent: One of the benefits of the HAA approach is that hitherto unrecognised features of interest may be brought to light. These rare 1920s survivors of the Nissen-Petren proprietary house-type (a peacetime adaptation of the Nissen hut) were identified during research in Queenborough (EH/Derek Kendall; DP018261).

and requiring additional levels of protection. It should not be concluded that undesignated areas or features do not form significant parts of the historic environment; rather, it is the case that these aspects do not satisfy the strict criteria devised for management purposes. Sometimes the absence of designation simply reflects a gap in knowledge, which may be filled when research becomes available (Fig 8).

2.5.6 The approach to area assessment must certainly take account of the importance ascribed to areas or components of areas as expressed in forms of designation; but it must also look beyond these special cases. The sum of an area's designated assets is not the same thing as its character or significance. Area assessment can cast the net more broadly to embrace other sets of values, which will lead to the identification of additional layers of significance. The important role that an unlisted school has played in the life of a community and still plays in views of the area, allegiances to different places of worship (or pubs), the informal uses of streets and open spaces, the enjoyment of eccentric features of a street scene – all these things represent a community's engagement with the wider historic environment and contribute to an area's particular character.

Case study: Sea Mills

Sea Mills Garden Suburb is a good quality and intact example of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin's model of a planned Detached Garden Suburb. It is Bristol's finest example of planned municipal housing, built in the aftermath of the First World War to provide 'Homes fit for Heroes' on land conveyed by Napier Miles of Kingsweston House specifically for the purpose of laying out a garden suburb. Part of the estate was designated a conservation area in 1981.

An assessment of the estate was carried out by the Save Sea Mills Garden Suburb Group (members of the local community rather than professional historic environment consultants) in order to persuade the local planning authority, Bristol City Council, to extend the conservation area and to make an Article 4 (2) Direction restricting permitted development rights. The first report by the group, *The Definition and Characteristics of a Post-World War One Garden Suburb, with Particular Reference to Sea Mills Garden Suburb, Bristol*, demonstrated that the suburb displayed all the classic characteristics of an Unwin-inspired scheme and that it was of national interest. A second report, *Conserving Sea Mills Garden Suburb*, made a case for the extension of the conservation area boundary to include the whole of the garden suburb.

Both documents were used to underpin a further report undertaken by the Conservation Studio for Bristol City Council, the *Sea Mills Conservation Area Boundary Review* (January 2008). The report's recommendation to extend the boundary to include the whole suburb was accepted by Bristol City Council but no further work was undertaken on the Article 4 Direction. The case demonstrates the impact of a community-led area assessment, which, while not achieving everything that it set out to do, delivered an effective evidence base for formal decision making.

2.5.7 Understanding and registering the range of local values through community participation can add depth to an assessment and will complement the expert view represented, for example, by designation. Furthermore, it can heighten awareness at the local level of the distinctiveness and value of historic areas, and, by encouraging local engagement with planning issues, it can help to identify successful approaches to managing change. The exploration of these values might extend the timetable of an area assessment, and it may not always be possible or appropriate, but it is an important way of addressing wider concerns for the retention or creation of sustainable communities.[24]

2.5.8 Expressions of value may also be implicit in the present state of the historic environment, where they can be nurtured or, if they are negative, transformed by appropriate intervention or management. The following questions may help to bring the issues into focus:

- Which heritage assets are designated as being of special interest? Do any others meet the criteria for designation? Do existing designations accurately reflect the type and level of significance identified?
- Which heritage assets have local value and why?
- What value can be placed on any identified character areas? Are they of exceptional, high, moderate, low or negative value?
- Which areas, buildings or other features show signs of being valued by the community (or sections of it), and which do not? Why?

2.6 Defining and evaluating significance

2.6.1 English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* define significance as 'The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance'.[25] A range of values may combine to enhance the overall significance of a place or building, but sometimes values may be in conflict with one another, as for example when the derelict and vandalised condition of a run-down area (= diminished aesthetic value) fosters a public desire for it to be demolished (= negative communal value), even though its evidential and historical value remains high.

2.6.2 Significance attaches variably to individual heritage assets, but also to ensembles ranging from small groups of buildings to neighbourhoods and places. Some types and degrees of significance are reflected in the existing designations, although new information may prompt a re-examination of their appropriateness. Other types and degrees of significance (not necessarily negligible) are not formally acknowledged and must be assessed according to the four value types set out above in section 2.5.3. In judging the significance of any given area or group of buildings it will be particularly helpful to consider how, and to what degree, the following criteria are met:

- Rarity: Does it exemplify a pattern or type seldom or never encountered elsewhere? It is often assumed that rarity is synonymous with historical importance and therefore high value, but it is important not to exaggerate rarity by magnifying differences and downplaying common characteristics.
- Representativeness: Is its character or type representative of important historical or architectural trends? Representativeness may be contrasted with rarity.
- Aesthetic appeal: Does it (or could it) evoke positive feelings of worth by virtue of the quality (whether designed or artless) of its architecture, design or layout, the harmony or diversity of its forms and materials, or through its attractive physical condition?
- Integrity: Does it retain a sense of completeness and coherence? In a historic landscape with a high degree of integrity the functional and hierarchical relationships between different elements of the landscape remain intelligible and nuanced, greatly enhancing its evidential value and often its aesthetic appeal. Integrity is most often used as a measure of single-phase survival, but some buildings and landscapes are valuable precisely because of their multiple layers, which can have considerable evidential value.
- Associations: Is it associated with important historic events or people? Can those associations be verified? If they cannot, they may still be of some significance, as many places and buildings are valued for associations that are traditional rather than historically proven.

2.6.3 An assessment of relative significance is, inevitably, a comparative process, and for this reason it relies heavily on the careful analysis of a range of information, including the knowledge of local people. It should aim to establish whether an area, or a building or other feature within it, is of local, regional, national or international significance. But the process may not stop here. A building of international significance (by virtue of an innovative, influential and essentially unaltered design, for example) may be situated in an area whose general characteristics are of merely local significance, but that contains several other buildings, and perhaps a designed landscape and a prehistoric earthwork, of either regional or national significance. Such multiple significances may be, to a large extent, isolated from one another, but they may also be interdependent, for example where the internationally significant building is a school purposely designed to serve an area of otherwise unremarkable social housing.

3 Levels of Historic Area Assessment

3.1 Selecting the right level of assessment

3.1.1 The evolution, character and significance of an area can be assessed in a number of different ways. The choice of approach will depend on:

- the planning or other circumstances prevailing at the time;
- an initial view of the nature and importance of the area under consideration;
- and the scale of the area to be assessed in relation to the desired planning outcome.

3.1.2 Three levels of Historic Area Assessment are defined below: Outline (Level 1), Rapid (Level 2) and Detailed (Level 3). Each examines an area more intensively than the last, and yields more detailed information and conclusions in exchange for a greater input of time and other resources. Each level is ideally suited to particular circumstances and can be adopted in isolation. It may sometimes be appropriate to adopt different levels of assessment sequentially, however, providing low-level coverage of a wide area while reserving the more intensive and time-consuming methods for where they are most needed.

The emergence of area assessment techniques in recent years has been accompanied by the adoption of a range of labels describing the approach. For example, the resulting documents have been variously termed 'area assessments', 'character assessments', 'appraisals', 'audits' and 'studies', and according to the extent of their coverage and the degree of detail that they have sought to achieve they have been variously classified

as 'intensive', 'extensive', 'rapid' and even 'whirlwind'. These often ill-defined and sometimes overlapping terms are a potential source of confusion (although this in no way invalidates the usefulness of their findings). Accordingly this document advocates the stricter use of a more limited range of terms: Outline, Rapid and Detailed Historic Area Assessments.

3.1.3 There are circumstances in which more comprehensive research and investigation may be desirable or appropriate: the Survey of London, for example, examines London's historic environment area by area in considerably more detail than is required for a Detailed Assessment as set out below. But typically such approaches, though valuable in the long run, do not aim to inform decision making within the lifetime of planning, development or regeneration initiatives. The intention of this guidance is not to imply that more comprehensive approaches to research are not worthwhile and valuable, but is to focus attention on methods that yield sound analysis in return for a modest input of resources.

3.1.4 All assessments will, to varying degrees, deal selectively with what an area has to offer, devoting greater time to aspects that are considered more significant, more representative or more unusual than others. Sometimes, however, it will be preferable to concentrate attention more explicitly on particular aspects of the historic environment rather than to deal with its every manifestation, either as a way of extending the area that can be covered with a finite level of resource, or as a way of targeting resources most effectively. A selective approach may be appropriate when a particular aspect of the historic environment is under special threat. Equally it may be adopted where one or more themes or periods in an area's history, or one or more of its prevalent building types, are of special importance in shaping its development and character. Examples might include an area retaining an important corpus of early or vernacular buildings, one that has been dominated for many years by a single industry, or one that retains housing illustrating important changes in social policy. The selected topics will receive greater emphasis, but it will remain important to link these to the wider development of the area. Clearly, if the assessment is framed too selectively it will not achieve the underlying purpose of understanding the area as a whole.

Case study: Tranmere, Wirral, Merseyside

The Tranmere outline assessment was carried out by English Heritage staff in 2004 as part of an internal exercise designed to provide information about the historic environment of areas scheduled for clearance under the Government's Housing Market Renewal Initiative. A team of two staff, using a pro forma as a check list, made an inspection of the area, made up of a number of discrete blocks of housing within a wider zone.

(EH/Garry Corbett DP072365)

Inspection took less than half a day, with halts in each block for taking notes and photographs. This 'windscreen survey' – in which the non-driving observer was driven around the area – provided historical and architectural context and enabled a relative assessment of the general condition of housing within the study blocks. The extent to which the historic environment had remained substantially intact was assessed through comparison between the area today and as represented (newly completed) on an early 20th-century Ordnance Survey map.

A report, taking a day to write and to integrate with scanned illustrations, provided a very brief account of the historic development of the wider area, described each area in turn as it survived at the time of survey, and drew conclusions about the significance of different elements of the environment, pointing variously to typicality, unusual variations, and salient characteristics. Recommendations were made relating to the degree to which proposed demolition would represent a serious loss to the historic environment, judged in broad, sub-regional terms.

3.2 Outline Assessments (Level 1)

3.2.1 Outline Assessments are designed to be speedy and decisive. They will be most appropriate where a large area has to be assessed very quickly, or where the available information suggests that a more intensive assessment is not needed – for example where the historic environment survives only fragmentarily. They can also be adopted as a preliminary scoping exercise where there is insufficient information to gauge the appropriate level of assessment or where, for example, a local planning authority wishes to anticipate future needs by acquiring baseline information. Outline Assessments are based on a historic map base, supplemented by external field observation, and for speed much of the area can be covered by car, rather than on foot. No systematic documentary research will be undertaken, but a limited number of secondary sources may be referred to. Typically an area of several square kilometres will be examined in a day, and a short illustrated report can be quickly produced.

3.2.2 It may be felt that Outline Assessments are superficial and that they therefore require little skill or experience

in those undertaking them. In fact they make heavy demands on the experience and judgment of the assessors, who must make snap decisions without the support of extensive documentary information or the time to build up knowledge of the area more gradually.

3.2.3 An Outline Assessment will:

- set out the general character of an area, or of sub-areas within it, drawing attention to representative building types and landscapes, and the main periods of development;
- identify any neighbourhoods, buildings, landscapes or other features of particular historic interest or significance;
- and identify which areas, if any, merit more detailed assessment, and which have been adequately served by the Outline Assessment.

Case study: Anfield and Breckfield, Liverpool

The conjoined suburbs of Anfield and Breckfield – just a small part of Liverpool and Merseyside targeted for Housing Market Renewal in 2003 – were selected for a Rapid Assessment both to explore the intrinsic interest of the area and to test the validity of the HAA approach. The resulting report traced the historical evolution of the area from semi-rural villa community to densely built-up residential suburb, and also highlighted the main alterations that occurred after 1900 once the area's dominant character was established. It placed the suburb in the wider context of Liverpool's expansion, identified the drivers of change, revealed the impact of changing architectural fashions and planning regulations, and showed how the community's needs were expressed in its commercial and institutional buildings. The report[26] also presented an analysis of the varying character of the area, drawing particular attention to streets and neighbourhoods where the integrity of the historic landscape was high and retention might therefore be desirable, and contrasting the largely residential streetscape with the important designed landscapes of Stanley Park and Anfield Cemetery.

Some recent decisions affecting Anfield and Breckfield have adversely affected its historic character, but others have responded to indications contained in the report. The approaches adopted here and elsewhere formed part of English Heritage's policy of encouraging HMRI partnerships to acknowledge the potential value of the historic environment as a focus for local identity and a basis for heritage-led regeneration. They also provided templates for the generic advice prepared by English Heritage for all HMRI Partnerships (EH policy guidance note *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment)*. Assessments by consultants, such as North Staffordshire (Conservation Studio) and Oldham-Rochdale (Derek Latham Assocs), are now routinely requested. The research on Anfield and Breckfield was subsequently published as *Ordinary Landscapes, Special Places: Anfield, Breckfield and the growth of Liverpool's suburbs*, which includes a chapter (chapter 7) aimed at stimulating greater awareness of what communities can achieve by looking at their own environment.[27]

(EH/Bob Skingle AA045501)

3.3 Rapid Assessments (Level 2)

3.3.1 Rapid Assessments deliver prompt findings at a much greater level of detail than Outline Assessments and are most suitable when it can be judged in advance that the significance, complexity or integrity of an area is greater than could be dealt with adequately by an Outline Assessment. They are based on external observation (carried out on foot) of the whole of the area, sometimes supplemented by internal inspection of a small number of buildings. They rely on extensive use of historic maps and directories, but the full range of primary sources will not be exploited systematically. Depending on the complexity of the evidence, they can be undertaken for areas as large as several square kilometres in extent or for areas as small as a single street.

3.3.2 A Rapid Assessment will additionally:

- narrate the origins and evolution of the area, identifying the main drivers of change;
- identify the range of landscape and building types, their dates and forms, and relate them to the wider evolution of the area;
- offer a summation, at one or more epochs, of the historic environment;
- distinguish, where appropriate, a series of character areas, and describe and explain the origins of their distinctive characteristics;
- and identify which areas, if any, merit more detailed assessment, and which have been adequately served by the Rapid Assessment.

Case study: Birmingham Jewellery Quarter

A Detailed Assessment of Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter was undertaken by RCHME/English Heritage in partnership with Birmingham City Council in 1998-2001.

The Jewellery Quarter is an exceptionally complete historic industrial quarter of international importance covering an area of 94ha (230 acres) approximately 15 minutes' walk north and north-west of Birmingham's Victoria Square. It originated in the late 18th century as a planned development of brick townhouses and surrounding villas built for the town's professionals, landowning classes and industrialists. By the early 19th century the character of the area had changed with the construction of smaller houses and workshops turning out a wide range of small metal items. Within 50 years a few larger factories, small to middle-sized jewellery factories and workers' housing had been added to the mix. In the second half of the 19th century there was a rapid expansion of the jewellery trade in the area, which culminated in the densely built cluster of jewellery-related and metal-working buildings and former houses we see today.

During the 1990s the area came under increasing development pressures, particularly for the conversion of former workshops and factories into inner-city apartments, resulting in a requirement for an assessment of the character of the quarter to inform its protection and future management. An Outline Assessment confirmed that the area was of considerable architectural and historical significance, but, owing to the built-up street frontages and difficulties ascertaining the degree of survival of rear workshops, it quickly became apparent that a Detailed Assessment would be necessary to obtain a sufficiently full understanding of its development and character. The results of the Outline Assessment were combined with further documentary research and analysis of newly commissioned aerial photography to select 50 of the best preserved buildings of varying type and date for external and internal investigation. This was accompanied by further research into the industrial processes, specialist

(EH/Damien Grady NMR 18494/01)

machinery and the underlying economic basis of the quarter. It emerged as an area of exceptional significance not just in visual terms but as a unique survival of a historic working industrial quarter operating in the same buildings, and in many cases using the same processes and machinery as it did more than 150 years ago.

The Detailed Assessment had a number of outcomes. Following public consultation in 2000 three separate conservation areas were consolidated into a single conservation area encompassing the whole quarter. The public consultation was accompanied by a major exhibition and the publication by English Heritage of an accessible guide to the area.[28] In 2002 English Heritage published a fuller account of the area including an analysis of its significance in a national and international context.[29] Subsequently a further 120 buildings in the quarter were statutorily listed as of special architectural and historical interest and in 2005 Birmingham City Council published (as Supplementary Planning Guidance) a design guide for the area. These measures were accompanied by the adoption of planning policies that have been successful in protecting the unique character of the quarter and its fragile manufacturing and craft base while permitting controlled new development on its periphery.

3.4 Detailed Assessments (Level 3)

3.4.1 Detailed Assessments deliver prompt findings for relatively small, densely built-up areas where the complexity of the historic environment calls for greater scrutiny of the evidence embodied in individual buildings and sites. Detailed Assessments are most likely to prove useful in areas such as historic town and village centres, where many individual buildings are themselves the product of complex development needing to be unravelled before conclusions about type, date and form can safely be drawn. Unlike the less intensive forms of assessment described above, Detailed Assessments encourage the creation of individual building records offering an account (summary or otherwise) of a building's evolution; and these records may usefully be entered into a database or GIS for analysis. While these records will often be derived purely from external observation, internal inspection will be desirable in some cases. Because the area is likely to be small it is probable that documentary sources will be exploited more fully. It is important to stress, however, that the creation of a series of individual building records does not in itself constitute an area assessment; instead the particular histories of individual buildings and sites must be interpreted and synthesised to inform the wider understanding of the area's development.

3.4.2 A Detailed Assessment will additionally:

- provide individual records of either (i) all buildings and landscapes in the area, or (ii) a selection of them (for example, those originating within a defined date range);
- where practical, draw upon a wider range of internal evidence;
- and explore systematically the available primary documentary sources.

3.5 Matching levels to circumstances

3.5.1 The following table sets out a range of planning circumstances or needs (not an exhaustive list), the level of Historic Area Assessment likely to form an appropriate response, and the main outcomes:

Circumstance	Level of assessment	Principal outcomes
1 Planned regeneration of a substantial area of undetermined heritage value	Outline (1)	• a brief account of the area's development • differentiation of areas of high, medium or low heritage value • summary of characteristic and distinctive landscapes • identification of key buildings and/or features • an ability to assess the impact of existing proposals for change • the ability to steer or advise on new proposals affecting the retention of local character and significance
2 Formulation of a master plan covering a small or medium-sized town	Outline (1)	All of the above, plus: • an overview of the development of the town • an indication of main character areas
3 Proposed scheme for environmental improvements in a historic village	Rapid (2)	All of the above, plus: • a systematic account of the area's development • descriptions of a series of character areas • an evidence base for formulating detailed policies for conservation and enhancement • a basis for targeting grant-aid effectively • grounds for new area or site-specific designations or alterations to existing ones
4 Evidence of incremental damage and loss in a historic suburb		
5 Specific proposals for redeveloping part of a town's historic core	Detailed (3)	All of the above, plus: • a comprehensive account of the area's development • detailed understanding of individual buildings and landscape features and their significance • a basis for management policies • in appropriate circumstances, an indication that a Heritage Partnership Agreement would be beneficial
6 Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan for (eg) a country house estate or university campus		

4 Fieldwork, research and analysis

This section offers guidance on the fieldwork and historical research that, to varying degrees, form the core of all Historic Area Assessments. Those undertaking assessments will need to be alert to the full range of topics discussed below, but the extent to which they can be developed will vary considerably according to the chosen level of assessment.

4.1 Personnel and equipment

4.1.1 Ideally, assessments will be carried out by a team of people combining complementary skills and experience in history, historical geography, architectural history, landscape history and archaeology, and familiarity with area assessment methodologies. Knowledge of the planning system, especially as it concerns the historic environment, will also be invaluable. In principle these qualities may be found in a single individual, but for health-and-safety reasons, and to ensure diversity of knowledge and skills, a minimum of two individuals is advisable for fieldwork. HAAs can be undertaken by historic environment specialists within a local authority or by volunteers, but it will often be necessary or advantageous to employ specialist consultants.

4.1.2 Specialist equipment is not required, but a conventional or digital camera is essential. Digital equipment will generally be preferred for its flexibility, but must be capable of taking pictures of adequate resolution and be provided with sufficient memory for the demands of rapid survey work, which may generate several hundred photographs in a day. A camera with a sensor of at least five mega-pixels, set at its highest resolution setting, will be adequate, but with the growing availability of higher-resolution cameras at moderate cost this standard can increasingly be bettered, with a beneficial rise in the information captured.

4.1.3 Those undertaking fieldwork will find it helpful to have a clipboard or weatherproof equivalent for note-taking and for keeping historic map extracts to hand, or a dictation device. Alternatively, a hand-held GPS device can be used for note-taking, enabling records to be downloaded directly to a database or GIS. The preparation of a handout for distribution during fieldwork will help to allay any suspicions that may be aroused in the locality by unfamiliar individuals undertaking fieldwork, as well as acquainting interested members of the community with the nature and purpose of the assessment.

4.2 Preliminary research

4.2.1 Preliminary research lays the foundation for subsequent fieldwork, highlighting issues, areas or features requiring particular scrutiny in the field. Historic Environment Records (HERs) maintained by local authorities, and the English Heritage National Monuments Record (where records made by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) and by English Heritage can be found) are essential starting points. Many HERs can be searched online via the Heritage Gateway website (www.heritagegateway.org.uk), which also includes contact details for those that are not available online. Additionally, various satellite imagery sites will assist in preliminary examination of an area.

4.2.2 The local Historic Environment Record (HER, although some are still known by the older name of Sites and Monuments Record or SMR) will provide important information on what is already known about an area and the extent of any designations. HERs vary in the scope of their holdings, but all currently have information on archaeological remains and finds, and most provide access to Urban Archaeological Databases and existing characterisation studies such as Historic Landscape Characterisations (HLC), Extensive Urban Surveys (EUS) and Conservation Area Appraisals where these exist. Increasingly they include information relating to the historic built environment. For areas in the care of the National Trust reference should be made to the NTSMR, Swindon (selected information is accessible through the Archaeology Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk). Further valuable material may be held by county archaeological societies and gardens trusts.

4.2.3 Familiarity with existing published accounts of the area will also be useful, including, where available, the Victoria County History, inventory and thematic volumes of the RCHME and the Survey of London, and the *Buildings of England* (Pevsner) series. Extensive research in primary sources may be deferred until the field examination has been conducted, as this in turn enables more efficient targeting of source materials.

4.2.4 Before fieldwork begins, the historic map series should be assembled and the main lines of topographic development should be identified. Maps may also permit the provisional identification of 'units of development'. These are the parcels of land that are built on or otherwise developed under the guidance or control of a single owner or developer. They can often be identified on maps by the conformity of roads or boundaries to a particular orientation or grid or because they are respected by later features. They may also be suggested by a unifying theme linking a number of place names or street names.

4.3 Fieldwork

4.3.1 The purpose of fieldwork is to refine understanding of the evolution of the area and to assess its character in more rounded ways than maps alone permit. Where maps provide the plan footprint of buildings and certain other features, fieldwork observes them three-dimensionally. It helps to understand how the lie of the land influenced the process of development and it enables the sequence of changes to be plotted in more detail than can be done from periodic map editions. It is concerned with data-gathering, but it is also an analytical activity, and will be most effective when fully informed by the questions listed above in Clarifying Historical and Architectural Development (section 2.3).

4.3.2 Fieldwork should aim to:

- Identify 'units of development' (*see* section 4.2.4), confirming or rejecting those conjectured on the basis of map analysis, and identifying others from architectural or other observations (they may be suggested by a uniform style of building or landscaping, or a recurrent motif, for example).
- Distinguish the typical 'build unit' (ie what was built in a single building campaign) in each unit of development, ranging from single buildings to whole streets, including any associated green spaces. Units may be distinguished by structural breaks, by changes in architectural form, or by more subtle variations in detailing. Field evidence will often point to many more build units than can be identified from maps. The importance of identifying them is that they give a picture of the mechanics of development – the number of builders involved, the scale of their enterprise and the variety of architectural forms adopted by them – factors that, cumulatively, are of great importance in forming the character of an area (Fig 9). For designed landscapes it will be similarly important to distinguish what was laid out, planted and built in each stage of development.

Fig 9 These small houses in Oxford illustrate how streets developed by small-scale artisan builders in the 19th century contrast sharply with the uniform streetscapes of large-scale developers. The variations visible here will register only faintly if at all in purely map-based analyses of the area (EH/Adam Menuge; DP072362).

- Establish the dates of buildings and other components of the landscape. Buildings can be dated approximately on the basis of their architectural style, plan-form and other design features, and this approach will be essential wherever map evidence is lacking or where it is available only at long intervals. For older buildings great care is required, as most medieval or early post-medieval buildings, particularly in towns, have been re-fronted or otherwise extensively altered in subsequent centuries. Date-stones may give assistance, providing their authenticity can be corroborated and so long as they are correctly assigned in contexts of phased development. Dated street and park furniture (lamp standards, drain covers, benches and other such features) may also provide guidance, though the dates may relate to the laying out or subsequent improvement of streets or parks rather than to the construction date of nearby buildings (Fig 10).
- Identify the function and use, now and historically, of buildings and of green or open spaces. For many buildings – particularly those of the 19th and 20th centuries – the original function may be self-evident from external observation, although trade directories will often yield greater precision. Earlier buildings, and any that have undergone considerable change, may prove harder to interpret. The ways in which buildings were used can often be inferred from the occurrence of certain external features or attributes. In houses, for example, the positions of entrances, windows, chimneys and external plumbing, together with variations in the distribution of decorative detail, will often suggest the uses of different parts of the building. The uses of green spaces often change over time as well: in York one of the strays, or commons, was used for wartime military training; burial grounds sometimes become public open spaces.
- Establish the range of types that occurs within a single functional category – for example, what sizes of house were built, what models (of grouping, position on plot, plan-form, style, etc) were adopted; are there any correlations between these variations and do they vary over time?
- Identify evolutionary patterns in the building stock or other landscape elements. Can trends be identified, such as the heightening of early houses to provide an additional storey, the replacement of traditional roofing materials, the abandonment of particular plan-forms and the emergence of others?
- Examine the social topography of the area. What kinds of site were favoured for different types of development or classes of house?
- Consider the archaeological potential of the area below ground and, particularly in open areas, in the form of surface evidence. What is its relationship to the existing landscape?
- Explore the relationship between landscape elements and area character (*see* section 2.2).
- Assess the condition and integrity of the historic environment, and note any factors influencing its capacity to absorb change.

Fig 10 Patterdale, Cumbria: Dated street and park furniture will often help to chart the evolution of places and designed landscapes. This wrought-iron bench, commemorating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, was placed alongside a popular footpath in Patterdale (EH/Jenifer White; DP072363).

4.3.3 The manner in which fieldwork is conducted will vary according to the chosen level of Historic Area Assessment. Except when carrying out Outline Assessments it will be necessary to walk every street in the area and where possible (having regard to the rights and sensitivities of owners and occupants) to seek other vantage points, such as back alleys and

courtyards, in order to gain information on the rears of buildings or other hidden parts. Internal inspection will generally form only a minor part of the assessment but even in a Rapid Assessment some public buildings may be quickly examined, and chance invitations to view other buildings may occur without the need for formal access arrangements, helping to confirm or extend the results of external analysis.

4.3.4 Not all streets or buildings will require the same amount of attention. Genuinely simple or repetitive features can be dealt with summarily. Large or complex buildings and landscapes, and those that incorporate several phases of development, will generally require closer scrutiny.

4.3.5 Observations in the course of fieldwork should be recorded in notes and photographs. A pro forma record sheet may help to maintain consistency in note-taking, but it should also provide space for 'free text'. An example, showing the kind of headings most likely to be useful, is reproduced as an appendix, but any assessment must respond to particular circumstances and needs.

4.3.6 Sufficient colour photographs should be taken to act as a visual notebook, including general views and, where appropriate, individual buildings, architectural details, inscriptions and other features of interest. It is essential, in view of the number of photographs that are likely to be taken, that a contemporaneous log of addresses or locations is generated in the field, so that subsequently the photographs can be identified correctly. Where the built environment is particularly dense, a large-scale map, marked up in the field and cross-referenced to the photograph list and notes, will help to avoid confusion.

4.3.7 The balance of photographs and notes should be geared towards economy of effort: photographs obviate the need for extensive notes, but some evidence is not reliably captured by photography (especially in less than optimum light conditions) and this may call for more detailed note-taking. Field notes are 'working records' and are not necessarily destined to be archived.

4.4 Documentary research

4.4.1 The range of documentary sources available for Historic Area Assessments is potentially vast, and even in a Detailed Assessment it will only be practicable to sample some of these sources. One benefit of fieldwork is that it will help to identify areas, landscapes and buildings that are either typical of the area or unusual, and this will help to target research efficiently. Sources can usefully be divided between those that can be reliably related to individual plots, buildings or landscapes[30] and those that typically yield more general information on the nature – often the economic make-up – of an area. In the first category the most widely available and easily assimilated sources are historic maps and trade directories, easily consulted at record offices, municipal archives and local studies libraries, and increasingly online.

4.4.2 For HAAs the most useful **maps** are those at scales of 1:10,560 (six inches to one mile) or greater, although for periods when these are unavailable smaller-scale maps will still be of use. There are large-scale maps dating from the 18th or early 19th century for most English towns and cities, and for many villages, and a few places enjoy the benefit of earlier maps. They were made for a wide variety of purposes, including estate management, conveyancing, agricultural enclosure, tithe apportionment and national defence. The products of numerous, mostly independent surveyors, they will need to be assessed on their individual merits. They are of varying standards of accuracy and, perhaps more importantly, differ considerably in what they select for portrayal.

4.4.3 **Ordnance Survey maps** are much more uniform, although practices and conventions varied over time.[31] Rich though the Ordnance Survey map series is, it will not always provide the desired information. Maps at scales larger than 1:10,000 generally omit contour information, so that it is difficult to relate buildings and other features to local topography. In many places several decades elapsed between successive map editions, and here intervening maps from other sources will certainly be required.

4.4.4 An unrivalled map series, where available, is that produced by the Goad Insurance Company from 1885 onwards. Restricted to areas of high insurance value such as commercial centres, docks and areas of concentrated industrial property, **Goad plans** – usually at a scale of 1:480 – employ a complex symbology to indicate functions, building materials, number of storeys, power arrangements and numerous other details. Many Goad plans are held by record offices and local studies libraries.[32]

4.4.5 Maps can usefully be supplemented by **aerial photographs**, which were taken in large numbers from the 1940s onwards, and sometimes earlier (see, for example, the important Aerofilms archive, now part of the National Monuments Record). Vertical air photographs resemble maps, but oblique photographs show building elevations and, especially in the form of stereo pairs, reveal something of the three-dimensional nature of the built environment. They are especially valuable for identifying ephemeral phenomena often disregarded by mapmakers, and for disentangling the often rapid development of military and military-industrial sites in the 1940s and later. They can also be used to examine industrial and other complexes where access is denied. The National Monuments Record holds the principal English collection of aerial photographs. Websites such as 'Google Earth', 'About My Place' and 'Windows Live! Search' are continually updated with new, high-resolution imagery and can reveal many details not available on any map.

4.4.6 **Trade directories** for the largest provincial towns existed in the 18th century and in the course of the 19th century they became available for every town and village in England, either as separate publications or as components of county-wide directories. Initially a guide to the principal tradesmen only, they grew to accommodate public functionaries and a growing proportion of private citizens, often (and most conveniently for HAAs) listed in the form of **street directories**, in which individuals' names are listed in the order in which their premises lined the streets. Sometimes these lists include house numbers, though care must be taken in case the street numbering has altered over time. Generally speaking, directories appear earlier, are more comprehensive and are easier to relate to existing buildings in the larger towns and cities than they are in smaller towns and villages. Directories were commercial productions and confine themselves to information deemed commercially useful. Accordingly they list only a proportion of the population – principally tradesmen and householders. The families of householders, and those lodging with them or living with them as servants, are generally omitted. Since they are a guide to selected occupants, street directories also make no reference to unoccupied premises, so the absence of a particular address cannot be taken as proof that it was not built. Finally, directories incorporate a bias in favour of the better-off; although

the more comprehensive town directories list many working-class householders, some streets of a uniformly proletarian character were not given house-by-house listings. A selection of word-searchable directories can be consulted online at www.historicaldirectories.org.uk.

4.4.7 **Building control plans** were required by local authorities to ensure conformity with local building by-laws, and were deposited by architects, builders or owners, whose names often appear on them. Larger towns and cities were generally the first to insist on them, and in some towns they survive from the mid-19th century onwards (some have been transferred to monochrome microfilm with the sacrifice of much information embodied in colour). In other towns they have been destroyed or dispersed. Those that survive are now mostly in record offices and archives but some remain with local planning authorities. Building control plans were listed in registers, which provide an index to lost plans as well as those that survive. Registers were compiled in the order in which plans were received, with the result that identifying all the plans relating to a particular street or district can be a lengthy task unless the register entries have been digitised.

4.4.8 For an accurate picture of household structure, of the occupational structure of a street or area and of patterns of social mobility, the decennial **census records** compiled between 1841 and 1911 (the latest currently available) will be most useful. They list everyone who slept at a given address on the night of the Census, and some households are therefore swollen by visitors (who are distinguished as such) while others are diminished by absences (which are not recorded). The amount of information captured by the Census is such that it will normally only be possible to sample it. One effective method is to identify streets or groups of houses (preferably surviving) of contrasting scale and form and to compare the occupations and household structures of the inhabitants, thus giving a social and economic dimension to the various types of house. The 1901 and 1911 censuses have been made available online by The National Archives; earlier census data can be consulted via a variety of subscription websites.

4.4.9 Collections of **old photographs**, often catalogued by street or district, are held by many local studies libraries, and represent an attractive and easily quarried resource. Especially for earlier

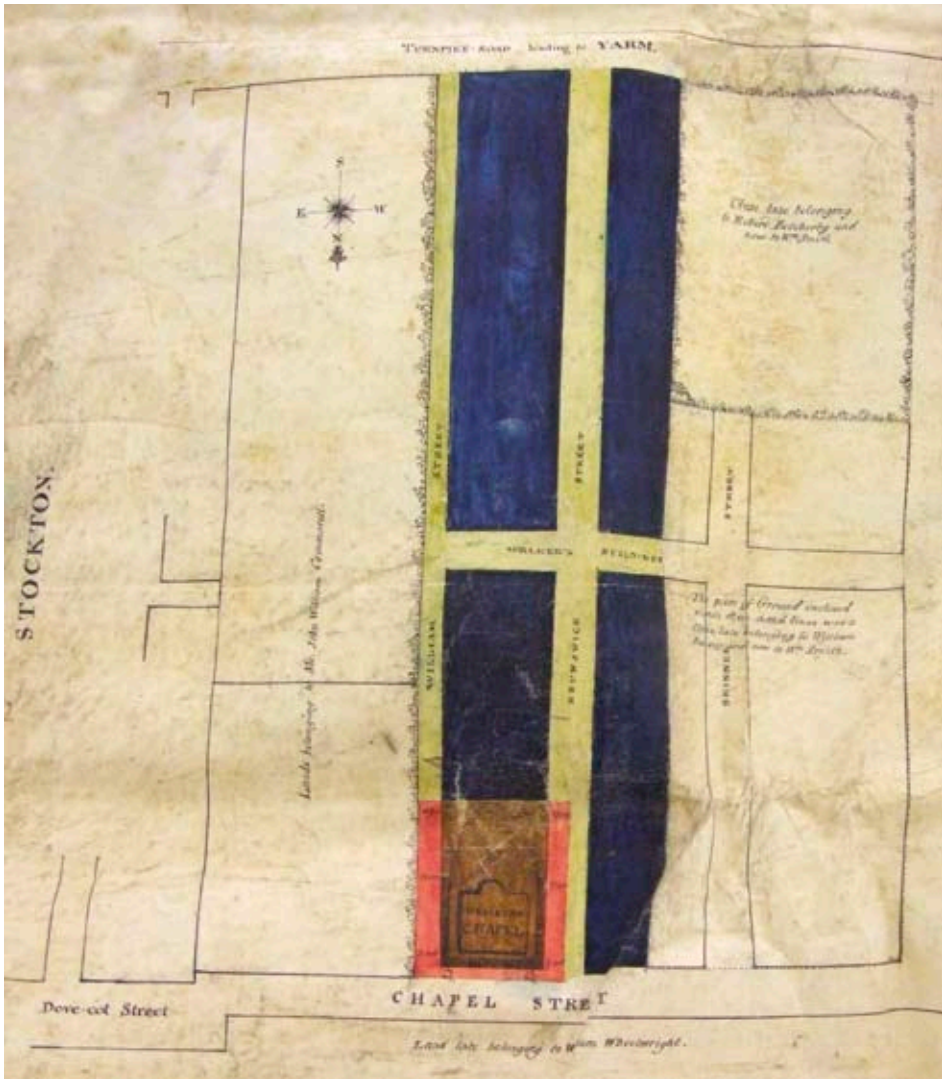


Fig 11 This 1824 plan, from the deeds for the Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Stockton-on-Tees, not only confirms the existence of the chapel, but provides information on the laying out of a new suburb in neighbouring streets (EH/Adam Menuge, by permission of Teesside Archives; DP072364).

periods, topographical views, often in local museums and galleries, are invaluable. Historic images are increasingly available online, but permission will normally be required for reproduction. Local newspapers often provide accounts of the opening of significant buildings, especially public buildings, and may give detailed accounts of their architecture and use. For the relatively recent past, oral history can be a valuable source of information, although its systematic exploitation can be a lengthy process.

4.4.10 A number of other record types are of enormous value in elaborating the initial findings of research and fieldwork, but they may be difficult to assimilate rapidly. For example, our understanding of earlier periods can be greatly enhanced by the use of **probate, estate, taxation and insurance records**, but these can be time consuming to analyse and are often difficult to correlate with individual buildings. The same is true of **rate books**, which survive from the 18th century or even earlier in some towns, recording the assessment of property for local taxation and sometimes providing more detailed evidence of the nature of the properties assessed. Other important sources include **property deeds** (Fig 11), **local authority minute books, district surveyor's returns, sanitary reports** and, if visiting The National Archives at Kew is a possibility, **IR58s** (the Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office survey under the terms of the Finance Act, 1910). Sources of this kind can be exploited systematically and to good effect where time is relatively abundant, but in other circumstances the scope for using them may be limited.

4.5 Analysing field and documentary evidence

Historic Area Assessments and Suburbs

Historic Area Assessments are increasingly used to explore the value and significance of England's many historic suburbs. Sometimes narrowly defined by

preconceptions derived from the garden suburb movement and its forerunners, suburbs also encompass many areas of denser development, including large areas of by-law housing from the period 1840–1914, and the huge swathes of both private and public housing built in the inter-war period. Indeed, they continue to be built today. Most suburbs are characterised by a degree of repetition (albeit with many variations on familiar themes), but their historical significance (as the product of the first industrial society, for example) is immense. Typically they possess relatively sparse heritage designations; but their value as ensembles is high – and vulnerable to erosion. Suburbs are particularly suited to Outline and Rapid HAAs, and these techniques have consistently demonstrated that these outwardly 'ordinary' landscapes retain much of interest and merit careful management.[33]

4.5.1 The process whereby the minutiae of field observation and documentary research are translated into a coherent account of an area's development and character is both crucial and complex. The following observations attempt to draw this process into open view.

4.5.2 Fundamentally analysis seeks to identify and explain significant patterns in the world around us. This involves sifting and sampling the available data in a variety of ways. It is important, for example, to know what types of building are represented in an area and which historic periods they represent, and to identify any trends they appear to embody. When these trends have been identified one can begin to look for their origins and for the principal stages in their development: where, when and why did the trend first surface, how long did it persist, how far did it spread, and how did it evolve over time? Stages in the evolution of a trend can be helpfully amplified by examining a few exemplars in more detail. These might include the first occurrence of a type in the area, an example from the period in which it was commonest, and a late instance in which, perhaps, the beginnings of new trends can already be identified. Ideally, exemplars will offer a combination of physical and documentary evidence, as this will generally permit the fullest understanding to be achieved, but this will not always be possible.

4.5.3 An example of the process described above might take the following form (Fig 12). A rural area on the edge of a major provincial town was transformed in the 19th century by successive waves of housing development, beginning with the spacious villas of wealthy merchants and culminating in closely packed terraces of small houses for the upper echelons of the working class. The earliest villas are now known only from maps and documentary sources; while these clearly illustrate their generous scale, the social status of their occupants and their impact on the shape of later developments, more extensive or subtle insights are harder to achieve. Many of the later villas survive, however, and the documentary sources for them are more extensive, making it possible to date them accurately and to identify their occupants from directories. Over time the scale and social status of new villas diminishes and there are also changes in their geographical distribution, as some parts of the area lose their social pre-eminence. By selectively researching single villas and villa developments that illustrate changing scale, architectural style, plan-form, plot layout and distribution, the surviving buildings can be correlated with particular social strata, helping to establish with some precision the historically changeable social contours of the area. A similar process can be undertaken to explore the advent and evolution of the terraced house in the area.

4.5.4 For the period in which they are available, historic maps may provide the easiest way of establishing a framework around which to fit the mass of available data. They show – provided they are detailed enough – what was there at a particular date, and what had appeared, as well as what had been removed, by the time the next map was prepared. Supplemented by observation and research, they are a powerful ready-made tool for analysis. But historic maps represent snapshots in time and may cut across important longer-term trends, so the temptation to treat them as demarcating significant periods in the development of an area should be resisted.

4.5.5 An essential way of presenting how areas change is in the form of a narrative, and this will always form an important component of an HAA. Narratives focus attention on causes and effects, influences and constraints, and should give to the physical manifestations of change a human texture and interest.

Fig 12 Breckfield, Liverpool: Standardised semi-detached villas of *c* 1860, each pair ringed by gardens, are hemmed in by smaller terraced housing of the 1870s and 1880s – an example of how landscapes evolve in response to rapid socio-economic changes (EH/Dave MacLeod; NMR 20747/50).

4.6 Presentation of results

4.6.1 Historic Area Assessments should present an overview of a specified portion of the historic environment, providing a reasoned and concise account of its origins and evolution, identifying the elements that survive from each period of its development, setting out its distinctive characteristics and offering observations on its condition and significance. They should enable both specialists and lay readers to judge which parts or features of an area are most significant or valuable and which are most vulnerable to change. They should also acknowledge which parts of the historic environment are heavily altered or degraded, and which are capable of absorbing – and indeed benefiting from – substantial change. In short, they should make a balanced case for the merits of the historic environment.

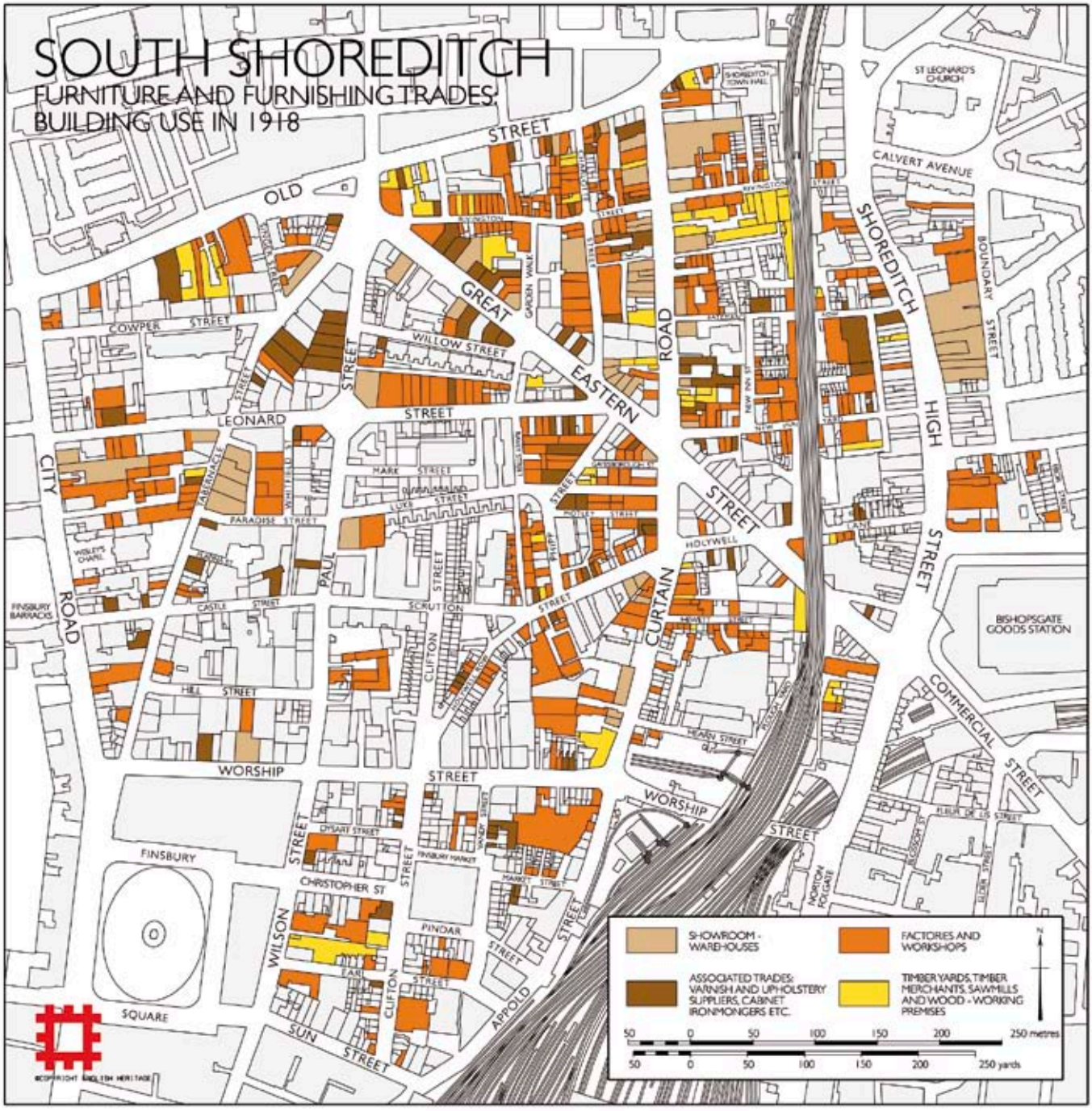


Fig 13 South Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney: Mapping the distribution of building functions or types, or historic social variations, can be a particularly effective way of explaining variations in physical character (EH/Andy Donald).

4.6.2 The results should be presented in a way that reflects the breadth, complexity and interest of the historical narrative, but also facilitates the rapid assimilation of salient points by a wide range of users. Throughout, the emphasis should be on presenting the fruits of analysis and on drawing out the main threads of the narrative, not on the amassing of detail for its own sake. The structure and content of reports will vary according to the particular nature of the area, the level of assessment undertaken and the specific requirements of stakeholders, but should normally include the following:

- a summary of the main findings;
- an introduction setting out the level of assessment (*see* section 3) and its purpose, when it was carried out and by and for whom, the boundaries of the area covered and any other limitations or constraints;
- an illustrated narrative, divided as appropriate to the area and describing its historical evolution, highlighting evidence for lost and vestigial landscapes and buildings, identifying the principal extant building types and open spaces, their chronology, architectural form and social context, and other elements of the landscape;
- observations on the present condition and character of the area, the extent to which it retains elements of demonstrable historical significance or amenity value and an indication of any existing designations;
- an assessment of the potential for further research;
- recommendations, if appropriate, for the management of the historic environment or for designations (local lists, statutory lists, scheduling, registering, conservation areas, etc);
- supporting maps, including, where helpful, purpose-drawn maps charting development or highlighting key elements of the landscape (Fig 13);
- references for all quoted material;
- and a list of published and other sources consulted.

4.6.3 Rapid and Detailed Assessments, as well as providing progressively more detail under the headings listed in 4.6.2, could also include:

- descriptions of a series of character areas, forming the basis for a finer-grained analysis of condition, integrity, significance and vulnerability to change;
- descriptions or analyses of individual buildings or other features of importance;
- and a summary account of the historic environment as existing at one or more appropriate epochs.

4.6.4 The appearance of the resulting document and the extent of any associated archive will vary considerably from one level of assessment to another. For Outline Assessments a simple annotated map and a small selection of photographs may suffice to illustrate the report, whereas a Detailed Assessment is likely to include a full series of historic maps, historic plans of individual buildings and developments, measured or interpretative drawings of representative or unusual buildings and numerous photographs, both modern and historic.

4.7 Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

4.7.1 In recent years GIS has emerged as a powerful tool for managing the historic environment. Individual site

Case study: Rievaulx, North Yorkshire

Rievaulx, a village in the picturesque valley of Ryedale on the edge of the North York Moors, is famous for its ruined Cistercian abbey, which in the 18th century became the focal point for a notable landscape garden (Rievaulx Terrace) on the estate of a nearby country house, Duncombe Park. It is also well known to industrial archaeologists as the site of an important 16th-century water-powered iron-smelting furnace. Vernacular houses of the 17th and 18th centuries and a medieval church or *capella ante portas*, restored by Temple Moore in 1906, add further interest to the small settlement. Both the Abbey (English Heritage) and Rievaulx Terrace (National Trust) have long been important visitor attractions, but the wider interest of the landscape, and the important historical links between its main elements, were not apparent to the casual visitor, who was also obliged to drive along narrow lanes between two adjacent sites for want of other communication.

The objective of the study, part of a linked series exploring key elements of the Ryedale landscape as part of the 'Can-Do' consortium of English Heritage, the North York Moors National Park and other partners, was to extend understanding of the landscape at large by probing neglected aspects and by focusing particularly on interrelationships between the various elements. Given the complexity of the individual monuments, ranging from much altered 17th-century longhouses to the abbey ruins themselves, the study inevitably relied heavily on a range of earlier work, including researches over many years by Gerry McDonnell, a systematic investigation of the housing by the RCHME in the 1980s, and a recently published account of the architectural development of Rievaulx Abbey. Additional architectural and archaeological fieldwork focused on testing and extending existing understanding and did not involve the production of formal records of individual structures and features.

The resulting overview of the development of the landscape was synthesised for general consumption in an attractive broadsheet, for distribution at visitor attractions, tourist information centres and other outlets in the locality. Using a mixture of field and documentary evidence this broadsheet explains the various features visible in the landscape, adding interest to a visit and providing reasons to explore local lanes and footpaths more fully, turning the eye away from the monument in isolation and towards its wider context.

(EH/Bob Skingle DP004255)

co-ordinates (point data), linear features and areas (known as polygons) ranging from a few square metres to many square kilometres, can be input to a GIS system and linked to supporting reference material, which can then be interrogated spatially alongside other data sets. The extent to which Historic Area Assessments are integrated with GIS will depend upon the availability to key stakeholders of the necessary software and upon the level of assessment undertaken.

4.7.2 GIS can facilitate the analysis of data but it is not a medium for presenting the full range of analytical insights. While an HAA may have as one of its objectives the population of a GIS, its full potential will be realised only if raw data are also analysed and worked up in the form of a narrative and discursive written report. The curation of GIS data (as with all digital data) poses particular challenges if long-term survival and accessibility are to be guaranteed.

4.8 Dissemination

4.8.1 The principal outcome of an HAA is an overview of the area, providing a context within which the particular value or significance of individual buildings or other features is apparent. This will normally be presented in the form of a report. The assessment should be circulated to all stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, with the option for them to offer comments and corrections before it is finalised. Dissemination in the form of hard copy should be supplemented by circulation of a digital version – preferably in a compressed file format such as PDF – to enable rapid transmission when required. Digital reports can also be uploaded to local authority or other websites.

4.8.2 Historic Area Assessments are about the places where people live and work, and there will usually be a lively local interest in the outcome. Many places will attract broader attention. Making the results of the assessment widely known encourages debate and stimulates appreciation of the area's history and landscape, but a published or web-based report may not reach all would-be users. Adopting additional or alternative methods – a book, a leaflet or broadsheet summarising findings in an accessible way, a local exhibition or talk – may therefore be invaluable.

4.8.3 The historical research and other observations contained in HAAs will remain valuable after the immediate needs for which they have been requested have been met. At least one copy should therefore be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record for public access. It is also good practice to make copies available to the local studies library and any other suitable local repository, such as a record office or museum. Wider circulation can be achieved by entering details of the HAA on OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations: www.ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis), where copies of reports can be attached.

4.9 Archiving

4.9.1 Any archive generated by the Historic Area Assessment should be deposited in a local repository that has suitable arrangements for the long-term preservation of such material. This may be the relevant Record Office, the local Museums Service, or a Local Studies Library or Local History Centre. Advice should be sought at an early stage as to the forms of data (hard copy or digital) that can be accepted.

4.9.2 All levels of assessment will result in the taking of photographs – often in large numbers – both as aide-memoires and as a record of what was observed. These are likely to depict a mixture of individual buildings or features, groups of buildings and general views such as street scenes, forming a valuable record of the appearance of an area at a particular point in time. For this reason it will be preferable if the photographs are not dispersed to a site-by-site cataloguing system. Given the diverse nature of the images, the most appropriate way of storing photographic prints is likely to be in the form of project files, arranged by sub-area, street or individual building as appropriate. Negatives or digital image files (and metadata) should be catalogued in such a way as to identify them as a set.

4.9.3 Some HAAs will be supported by a greater or lesser number of records (written or drawn) of individual buildings, which are likely to have been selected for their representative or illustrative value, although in Outline and Rapid HAAs there may be few if any formal site records of this kind. Where they exist they should also be archived (for further details see *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*).

5 Historic area assessments in action

This section aims to assist those involved in specifying and commissioning Historic Area Assessments. Reference should also be made to the list of key benefits that can follow when the resulting findings are applied systematically to the formulation of planning policy and heritage protection (*see* list inside front cover).

5.1 Identifying needs and involving stakeholders

5.1.1 Historic Area Assessments are intended to provide prompt results, and so, where only a small commitment of time and other resources is involved, they can generally be achieved without much formal planning. More detailed or complex assessments, or those involving a greater number of interested parties ('stakeholders') or having a high profile locally, will benefit from a more formal approach to agreeing needs, objectives, roles and responsibilities, and to managing the timetable and budget in ways that allow plans to be revised in the light of new discoveries. For such projects English Heritage uses the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* guidelines, and the same approach will be a requirement for work considered by English Heritage for grant-aid.[35]

5.1.2 The form that a Historic Area Assessment takes should be influenced by the needs it proposes to address, the urgency of those needs and the people and organisations it seeks to benefit. Most HAAs will aim to produce:

- a sound basis (the 'evidence base') for informed decision making in planning, regeneration and conservation;
- and greater public awareness and better stewardship of the area's historic environment.

5.1.3 In order to achieve these aims the following objectives are likely to be set:

- enhanced understanding of the nature, origins and development of the historic environment;
- awareness of the current condition and character of the historic environment;
- and sound understanding of the significance of the area as a whole and of its main component parts.

5.1.4 It is important, wherever a Historic Area Assessment is intended to deliver benefits in terms of planning, regeneration,

Case study: Harmondsworth, London Borough of Hillingdon

English Heritage commissioned Pre-Construct Archaeology to carry out an assessment of Harmondsworth (London Borough of Hillingdon) and its immediate surroundings in anticipation of large-scale developments. The most prominent of these was the requirement for a third runway at Heathrow Airport, although no planning applications had been received at the time that the assessment was carried out. The assessment covered both the built environment and buried archaeological remains in considerable detail. The built environment component of the survey identified features and buildings of architectural or historic interest within the existing conservation area, and fragments of historic landscape, buildings and features within the wider study area, revealing a historic connection between structures and landscape. It demonstrated that the character and significance of many of the buildings are enhanced by or dependent upon their location, and that the level of historic survival was unusually high for a village settlement relatively close to London, retaining evidence of both its rural character and its historic reliance on agriculture.

The report[34] identified and assessed such archaeological remains as might be damaged or lost through construction and other works associated with any possible redevelopment of the site. The study recommended that some buildings should be assessed further, to establish whether they should be listed or locally listed. No new conservation area extensions or designations were recommended.

The Harmondsworth assessment was helpful to advisors within English Heritage, providing evidence of the impact on the historic environment that would result from the proposals for a third runway at Heathrow Airport. The study was also used by the Diocese of London to assist them in preparing a case against the destruction of the village of Harmondsworth by the new runway, as originally planned. The revised proposal is for an altered alignment of the runway that now preserves the village; a victory for the Diocese of London and for the village residents. The study has been presented to the Department of Transport to provide baseline information for those considering the impact of the proposed third runway on the historic environment.

(EH/Derek Kendall DP075083)

development control or heritage protection, that the mechanisms and resources for acting upon its findings are identified at an early stage in the process.

5.1.5 Where the motive for undertaking the assessment is to anticipate major change, timing will be crucial. Clearly the earlier in the planning process that the assessment is carried out, the more time there will be to incorporate representations from the major stakeholders, and the more useful the document will be in informing decisions before any major changes take place. Where time is very short, a speedier type of assessment may still be able to deliver useful conclusions, but public bodies have a duty to ensure that the time needed for essential research and consultation is not unreasonably curtailed.

5.1.6 Stakeholders will normally include the local planning authority, housing associations, residents' associations and other community groups, the local civic society, archaeological society, gardens trust or equivalent, English Heritage and the relevant national amenity societies. In certain circumstances the stakeholders may include other government agencies (such as CABE and Regional Development Agencies), Housing Market Renewal partnerships, regeneration companies and private developers. For some stakeholders HAAs will form only one part of a larger strategy for an area, which may embrace economic regeneration, housing provision, environmental improvements or tourism. One or more stakeholders will generally define the brief for the assessment, and the results should be shared with them as soon as possible.

5.1.7 Early consultation with the community about proposals to carry out an HAA, although not a statutory duty, is highly desirable. A public meeting, an exhibition or a notice in the local community newsletter provides an opportunity to explain the purpose and process of the area assessment. It is a

means of disseminating information, and by inviting feedback, can prove a useful way of gathering information on particular assets or features in the area. When considering whom to consult, a useful starting point is to contact The Heritage Alliance (Heritage Link) at www.heritagelink.org.uk. This organisation brings together numerous voluntary organisations concerned with heritage in England, including specialist advisers, practitioners, managers, volunteers, owners and local building preservation trusts – people who often have a direct role in managing the historic environment.

5.1.8 The local built and historic environment can form an important focus for community regeneration activity. Many authorities are being encouraged to integrate local strategies for place making through the Sustainable Community Strategy, which informs local planning policy through the Local Development Framework and the Local Area Agreement. An increasing number of local authorities recognise the benefits of combining consultations for the preparation of all three strategy documents, which at the least can minimise the burden of work for local people and stakeholders.

5.2 Commissioning Historic Area Assessments: a checklist

5.2.1 No single method of putting the work out to tender prevails, but the main stages in the process are likely to be as follows.

5.2.2 The commissioning body should identify its own needs, both short-term and longer-term (*see* 'Key benefits' at the beginning of this document). It is also advisable to consider whether economies or other benefits might accrue from partnerships with other organisations having similar or overlapping needs. If these needs cannot be met by the client's own staff resource the client will then invite a number of consultants to tender for the work. The invitation will be accompanied by a brief stating clearly:

- the purpose and scope of the work;
- the boundary of the assessment;
- the proposed methodology (*see* section 3 Levels of Historic Area Assessment);
- the required outcomes (usually a number of hard copies of a report and a digital copy; sometimes other products as well);
- the criteria for selecting contractors (these should include the experience and track record of contributors);
- the arrangements for monitoring and sign-off;
- the timetable for completion;
- the need for a health and safety risk assessment;
- the arrangements for stakeholder consultation and/or community consultation (usually one or two public meetings);
- the arrangements for dissemination and archiving;
- and the deadline for tenders to be received.

5.2.3 The cost of a Historic Area Assessment will vary considerably according to:

- the size of the area and the level of assessment proposed;
- the density and complexity of its historic environment;
- the knowledge and experience of those undertaking the work, including their familiarity with the area itself, with the available research materials and with area assessment techniques;
- and the precise form in which the results are presented.

5.2.4 On the basis of the brief, and calculating the costs of professional time, travel and production costs, the consultants will return a tender response to the client, together with a proposed project design reflecting their own knowledge and experience.

5.2.5 Based on the responses received (and, when appropriate, on interviews as well) the client will select the consultant to appoint on the basis of value for money and relevant expertise.

5.2.6 Regular review-point meetings will be scheduled to ensure that the work proceeds according to plan and that any unforeseen problems are identified at the earliest possible stage.

5.2.7 Where specialists – in community consultation, for example – are engaged in addition to a principal contractor it is particularly important to establish good communications between the various contributors from the outset.

5.2.8 When the work is at an advanced stage the consultant will submit draft copies of the report to the client and stakeholders for comment.

5.2.9 The consultant will complete the work in the light of comments received and submit the requisite number of copies to the client.

5.2.10 The consultant or the client (whichever has been agreed) will disseminate the finished work to stakeholders and make suitable arrangements for archiving the project materials and for public access to them.

Appendix: sample field record sheets

The following sample field record sheets, or pro formas, may be found useful in conducting the fieldwork for an HAA. The format can be used either in paper form or in digital format, for example as structured fields in a GPS (global positioning system) data-logger, from which entered data can be downloaded directly into a database or GIS. The benefits of using a pro forma include the following:

- speedier data collection, achieved by pre-printing repetitive elements or by setting out a range of terms that can be quickly selected in the field;
- greater consistency in the data collected, especially where the work is shared by a number of individuals;
- and adherence to national standards for data collection, making for greater comparability of data and easier inputting into a database.

In order to expedite the collection of field data the headings of the pro forma consist principally of those best completed in the field, either from direct observation, or through reconciling field evidence with the limited range of map and other sources that can be carried conveniently during fieldwork (these may include one or more large-scale map editions, extracts from a historic street directory and a print-out of existing designations). These headings are supplemented by a small number of standard identifiers – address, Ordnance Survey grid reference, etc – and cross-references to photographs, ensuring that the subject of the data cannot later be mistaken.

A pro forma that attempts to anticipate every eventuality, by eliminating the need to do more than tick boxes or circle terms, will necessarily be long and complex, and may ultimately defeat the object of saving time in the field. Generally it is better to leave space for a longhand summary and for sketches (which can be continued on the reverse of the sheet if necessary).

Two sample record sheets, each with the same headings, are appended here to illustrate contrasting applications. One is used in a manner that will be familiar to many, to note details of a single building; the other takes a group of suburban streets as its 'unit of record'. The format is therefore flexible enough to be used for assessment at a variety of resolutions, depending on the level of HAA adopted, the interest or complexity of the historic environment and the time available.

The structure of the record sheet illustrated here should not be regarded as fixed, although it should always conform to the national MIDAS Heritage data standard.[36] It can be adjusted, where necessary, to suit local conditions or the particular needs of the assessment. For example, it may be desirable to include fields relating to condition, the analysis of views or an assessment of permeability. In the field it is worth considering what will be adequately documented by the accompanying photographs, and limiting written descriptions accordingly. On completion it is advisable to process the results (for example, in producing a written synthesis) as quickly as possible. While pro formas such as these can form the basis of brief but useful records in their own right, the production of a Historic Area Assessment depends upon collating, contextualising and synthesising the information they contain.

The following notes explain the intention behind some of the pro forma headings:

- Provisional survey No. – generated sequentially in the field, and cross-referenced simultaneously to marked-up maps and photo log-sheets.
- OS national grid reference – derived from a modern OS map or GPS. An 8-figure reference is normally the minimum requirement for buildings. For small buildings or features a 10-figure reference is preferable.
- District and County/Unitary Authority. In Greater London these are replaced by London Borough.
- Designations. The main historic environment designations are given, but natural environment or other designations can be added if appropriate.
- Photograph Nos. A separate log should be generated in the field, cross-referenced to the Provisional survey No.
- HER No. or other identifier. It is helpful to record (either before or after fieldwork) existing records in the Historic Environment Record, the National Monuments Record, or other depository.
- Building or monument type and Category – best restricted to an agreed range of standard terms, as defined in the NMR *Thesaurus of Monument Types*.
- Historic integrity. This is a measure of how completely or intelligibly the dominant phase or phases of the historic environment survive. Integrity is high when numerous individual features remain, when the patterns of road layout, plot boundaries or other associated features are also present and legible, and when subsequent intrusions or additions are few in number and small in scale. Integrity is low when the surviving elements of the historic environment are few in number, isolated, much altered, deprived of their historic setting or otherwise heavily degraded.
- Value of further investigation. An estimate of how much more would be gained from undertaking more detailed investigation (such as internal inspection) or research. This estimate must take account of the subject's likely significance and its claims over comparable examples.

Historic Area Assessment Field Record Sheet

Provisional survey no. *3* Date: *24/4/2004* Investigator: *CG*

Unit of record: building / complex / block / street / development / neighbourhood / open space / designed landscape / other feature (specify):

OS national grid ref: *SJ 31 91* OS County Series sheet no: *Cheshire 7.11*

Name: *Rice Lane Area* Former name(s):

Address: *Egremont* Civil parish: *Wallasey*

District: *Wirral* County/Unitary Auth^{y}: *Merseyside*

Designations: Scheduled monument Listed building grade: I II* II Conservation Area

Parks & Gardens Register Battlefields Register Locally listed building None

Photograph nos. *Card 1, 27-39* HER No. or other identifier:

Building/monument type(s): *terraced housing, etc* Category: *domestic, commercial*

Earliest phase: *c1900* Later phase(s): *1909-14*

Materials: Walls: *brick* Roof: *Welsh slate*

Current use: *mostly domestic; some commercial*

Condition: good / fair / poor / vacant (upper floors/partly) / derelict / ruin / facade / demolished

Historic integrity of area or complex site: high / medium / low

Value of further investigation: high / medium / low / nil Contact:

SUMMARY (main features, development, setting, initial assessment of significance, additional information, sketch plan, etc):

N end (Trafalgar Road): large shops and dwellings. NW end (Rice Hey Rd) large 2½-storey houses, good decorative detail, forecourt, large rear wings. Generally declining status of housing towards SE (Clydesdale Rd area) – post-1909 infill, pre-1914 small culs-de-sac terraced housing with direct entry (Woodall Ave, yellow brick).

Unusual 1909-1914 Guildford St row of semi-detached houses (same type of small terrace houses, direct entry), plain detail, single-storey outshuts. Also in Guildford St is United Reform Church and Egremont Mission.

Rudgrave Square: unusual allowance of long front gardens on one side, 2½-storey houses, polychrome brick detail, 1-storey bays.

King Street: 3-st commercial street frontage houses and shops combined. Cinema.

Lee Rd: forecourts, 1 and 2-st bays.

Charlotte Rd: multi-phase terrace, 1-st bays, forecourts, modest dec detail, some semis at top end.

Verdict: good variety of housing, middle class to workers. Good detail in biggest houses. Other areas to W: good quality semi and detached houses and good quality residential area.

Historic Area Assessment Field Record Sheet

Provisional survey no. *17* Date: *19/7/2009* Investigator: *AM*

Unit of record: building / complex / block / street / development / neighbourhood / open space / designed landscape / other feature (specify):

OS national grid ref: *SE 1234 5678* OS County Series sheet no: *Yorkshire 154.14*

Name: *The Oaks* Former name(s): *Ainsty Lodge; The Oaks School*

Address: *7 Oak Avenue* Civil parish: *Harrogate*

District: *Harrogate* County/Unitary Authy: *North Yorkshire*

Designations: Scheduled monument Listed building grade: I II* II Conservation Area

Parks & Gardens Register Battlefields Register Locally listed building None

Photograph nos. *Card 2, 1-4* HER No. or other identifier:

Building/monument type(s): *villa (detached)* Category: *domestic*

Earliest phase: *1862 (datestone)* Later phase(s): *c1900; 1930s; c2008*

Materials: Walls: *sandstone ashlar* Roof: *Welsh slate*

Current use: *domestic (apartments)*

Condition: good / fair / poor / vacant (upper floors) / derelict / ruin / facade / demolished

Historic integrity of area or complex site: high / medium / low

Value of further investigation: high / medium / low / nil Contact: *01234 567890 (est. agts)*

SUMMARY (main features, development, setting, initial assessment of significance, additional information, sketch plan, etc):

3-bay, 2-storey W front with lower rear range (largely not seen) projecting from N end. Italianate details, inc. diamond-pointed quoins & bracketed window surrounds to front. Entrance off-centre, giving larger rooms to S in main block. Datestone above entrance: 'LJ | 1862' (1873 directory has Mrs Ada Jopson). Panelled shutters and moulded cornices to principal rooms.

Billiard Rm (1-storey, lantern to Cumbrian slate roof) added to N c1900 (straight joint, shallower stone courses); coloured glass in transom-lights.

Steel-framed windows on 1st floor of rear range (N elev.) may date from school use (named on 1939 OS map).

Conversion to apartments c2008 has retained main elevations, but forecourt walls, railings and 3 gate piers (of 4 – carriage drive) removed for car parking. Remaining gate pier inscribed 'LODGE'. Garden to rear retains mature trees.

1½-storey stable & coach house backs on to Lime Avenue to E. Roof renewed in felt. Windows enlarged and garage doorway inserted facing road.

Summary: the largest & best-preserved of the Oak Ave villas, with indications of good internal survival, but setting to front impaired. Coach house disused?

Notes

1 English Heritage 2010 *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments in a planning and development context*

2 English Heritage 2008 *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, London. Also available at www.english-heritage.org.uk/Publications.

3 English Heritage forthcoming *Characterisation and Spatial Planning*. This leaflet will also be published on English Heritage's HELM website (www.helm.org.uk) in May 2010.

4 Clark, J, Darlington, F and Fairclough, G 2004 *Using Historic Landscape Characterisation*. www.english-heritage,org.uk/Characterisation: English Heritage and Lancashire County Council

5 *Conservation Bulletin* **47** (Characterisation special issue), Winter 2004–5; Bee, S *et al* 2005 *Growing Places: heritage and a sustainable future for the Thames Gateway*. London: English Heritage

6 English Heritage 2005 *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment*, London; Menuge, A and Taylor, S 2004 'Anfield and Breckfield, Liverpool: a Rapid Area Assessment of the built environment'. *English Heritage Architectural Investigation Report* **B/006/2004**

7 See www.english-heritage.org.uk/HeritageProtection for up-to-date information on Heritage Protection Reform.

8 The European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe 2000) gives the following definition: 'a "Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Article 1 (a)).

9 Menuge A and Withey M 2005 'Berwick-upon-Tweed, Tweedmouth and Spittal: Rapid Character Assessment'. *English Heritage Architectural Investigation Division Report Series* **B/013/2005**

10 Menuge, A with Dewar, C 2009 *Berwick-upon-Tweed: three places, two nations, one town*, Swindon: English Heritage

11 *Conservation Principles*, 27–32 [*see* note 2 for complete reference]

12 For recent guidance on recording, see the companion publications: English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*, Swindon; English Heritage 2007 *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: a guide to good recording practice*, Swindon; and English Heritage 2008 *Understanding Historic Buildings: policy and guidance for local planning authorities*, London.

13 See, for example, Hoskins, W G 1955 *The Making of the English Landscape*, London: Hodder and Stoughton; Conzen, M R G 1960 *Alnwick, Northumberland: a study in town-plan analysis*, London: George Philip and Son; and Dyos H J 1961 *Victorian Suburb: a study of the growth of Camberwell*, Leicester: Leicester University Press.

14 See for example Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) 1969, *Peterborough New Town: a survey of the antiquities in the Areas of Development*, London: HMSO; and various RCHME surveys in advance of the radical changes wrought by Urban Development Corporations in the late 1980s.

15 English Heritage guidance on the application of characterisation techniques to urban landscapes is in preparation.

16 Thomas R M 2006 'Mapping the towns: English Heritage's urban survey and characterisation programme'. *Landscapes* **7**, 68–92

17 English Heritage 2006 *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, London

18 Heritage Lottery Fund, 2008 *Conservation Management Planning*, available at www.hlf.org.uk/hlf/docs

19 See English Heritage, forthcoming *The Setting of Historic Assets: English Heritage Guidance*.

20 Barson, S *et al* 2006 'Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent: Historic Area Appraisal'. *English Heritage Research Dept Report Series* **39/2006**

21 Countryside Commission 1996 *Village Design: making local character count in new development* (parts 1 and 2), Cheltenham; Countryside Agency 2003 *Parish Plans*, Cheltenham; Countryside Agency 2003 *Town Design Statements: why and how to produce them*, Cheltenham.

22 Smith, J and Rogers, R 2006 *Behind the Veneer: the South Shoreditch furniture trade and its buildings*. Swindon: English Heritage

23 *Conservation Principles*, 27–32 [*see* note 2 for complete reference]

24 For an example of community-led area assessment see Peter Guillery *et al*, 'South Acton: Housing Histories: an Historic Environment Characterisation Study' (English Heritage, Architectural Investigation Reports and Papers **B/001/2005**). Part of the English Heritage strategy for regeneration in Berwick-upon-Tweed (*see* case study) is the establishment of a local recording group, which, over time, can increase knowledge and awareness of the town's buildings and thus enable local values to be represented in future decision making.

25 *Conservation Principles*, 72 [*see* note 2 for complete reference]

26 Menuge, A and Taylor, S 'Anfield and Breckfield, Liverpool: a Rapid Area Assessment of the built environment'. *English Heritage, Architectural Investigation Report Series* **B/006/2004**

27 Menuge, A 2008 *Ordinary Landscapes, Special Places: Anfield, Breckfield and the growth of Liverpool's suburbs*, Swindon: English Heritage

28 Cattell, J and Hawkins, B 2000 *The Birmingham Jewellery Quarter: an introduction and guide*. London: English Heritage

29 Cattell, J, Ely, S and Jones, B 2002 *The Birmingham Jewellery Quarter: an architectural survey of the manufactories*. Swindon: English Heritage

30 For designed landscapes, see Lambert, D, Goodchild, P and Roberts, J 2006 *Parks and Gardens: a researcher's guide to sources for designed landscapes* (3 edn). Reigate: Landscape Design Trust; and records accessible at www.parksandgardens.ac.uk

31 For Ordnance Survey mapping conventions, and for details of map scales and editions, see Oliver, R 2005 *Ordnance Survey Maps: a concise guide for historians* (2 edn). London: The Charles Close Society

32 For coverage of Goad plans, see Rowley, G 1984 *British Fire Insurance Plans*. Old Hatfield, Hertfordshire: Chas E Goad Ltd

33 Menuge, A 2008 [*see* note 27], especially chapter 7: 'Understanding historic suburbs'.

34 Pre-Construct Archaeology 2004 'An Archaeological and Historic Environment Characterisation Study of Harmondsworth and its Environs'. Unpublished report for English Heritage

35 English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: the MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*. www.english-heritage.org.uk/morphe

36 Lee, E *et al* 2007 *MIDAS Heritage: the UK Historic Environment Data Standard*. Forum for Information Standards in Heritage (FISH): www.midas-heritage.info

Acknowledgements

This document has been prepared by Adam Menuge with contributions from Susie Barson, Colum Giles, John Cattell, Charles Wagner and Jenifer White. English Heritage's cross-departmental Architectural Guidance Steering Group, convened by John Cattell, oversaw the preparation of the document; its members included Rebecca Clark, Shane Gould, Delcia Keate, Edmund Lee and Sheila Stones. Numerous English Heritage staff contributed time and expertise, including Paul Adams, Pat Aird, Dave Batchelor, Tim Brennan, Wayne Cocroft, Keith Emerick, Mike Evans, Graham Fairclough, Peter Guillery, Owain Lloyd-James, Duncan McCallum, Lucy Oldnall, Alastair Oswald, Dave MacLeod, Caroline Powers, Sarah Prince, Darren Ratcliffe, Alyson Rogers, Ross Simmonds, Amanda Smith, Joanna Smith, David Stuart, Simon Taylor, Roger M Thomas, Emma Turner, Dave Went and June Warrington.

The guidance has benefited significantly from an extensive consultation in the fields of heritage and planning. We are especially grateful to the following organisations – whose logos appear on the back cover – for commending the use of the document: ALGAO, CBA, IHBC, Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies, the National Trust and RTPI. Many other individuals have contributed valuable comments and suggestions, including David Baker OBE, Marion Barter, Pete Boland, James Caird, Jill Channer, Sarah Green, Lynn Kilpatrick, Paul Lavelle, Andrew Matheson, John Roberts, John Silvester, Steve Skelton, David Thackray, Gill Thompson and Lynne Walker.

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Front cover: *A Historic Area Assessment in progress in Peckham, London Borough of Southwark (EH/Derek Kendall; DP094197).*

Published June 2010

Edited and brought to press by
David M Jones, English Heritage Publishing
Designed by www.mark-simmons.com
Printed by PurePrint

FSC Mixed Sources
Product group from well-managed forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SGS-COC-005660
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Product Code 51604

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