

# Heritage COVID-19 Lockdown



The heritage industry is facing COVID-19 challenges: from fieldwork, a key part of appraising heritage assets, to the decision-making process. As the ability to undertake fieldwork is reduced, the effects will be felt from new listings to pre-application discussions and determination. However, as the planning process adapts under emergency measures, so too is the heritage industry, remotely with clients and their design teams to develop strategies in live collaboration.

## Lockdown challenges

- Site visits and investigation
- Archive research
- Application/Pre-application meetings
- Slowdowns in pre-application advice and decision-making
- Building recording
- Funding for conservation and maintenance
- Delays to listings/Conservation Area designations

**For more information please contact your local Lichfields office.**

## Getting ahead

While fieldwork will likely be delayed for some time due to lockdown, social distancing and restrictions on non-essential travel, the planning process is continuing under emergency measures including delegated powers and video-conferencing. See our online tracker of local authorities for more information.

Desk-based site appraisals are often possible and acceptable from a local authority/Historic England standpoint. Lockdown may be a good time for research (despite many archives being closed) and heritage-focussed design development to ensure development schemes are in a strong position for applications to be submitted once restrictions ease.

Historic England has assured that listings are still being processed but may take longer than usual and are assessed in a different way. Long delays and temporary holds are expected for local authorities identifying Conservation Areas and locally listed buildings. Many local authorities, as well as Historic England, are still carrying out pre-application discussions to help evolve acceptable projects and designs.

## How can Lichfields assist?

We are able to review development schemes against heritage legislation and policy and advise on the best ways forward. We are also able to undertake desk-based site appraisals using online archive resources, research and historic mapping. Working with our in-house GIS team, we can produce Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping to scope a site and its surroundings.

Historic England and local authorities' services are largely ongoing with some delays. Both are offering virtual meetings for application and pre-application discussions which we are well placed to engage with.

The current economic climate will also have an impact on the viability and sustainability of many heritage assets due to new difficulties in funding maintenance and conservation. This could lead to emergency repairs being necessary and increases in heritage at risk. We can assist advising on what constitutes repairs to a listed building (not requiring listed building consent), on urgent works and potential enforcement. As many LPAs are working from home, we can still engage with Conservation Officers, despite the current challenges.

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