

Milton Keynes New Town Heritage Register Selection Criteria

Prepared for Milton Keynes Council
November 2017



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Executive Summary

The Milton Keynes New Town Heritage Register is a list of locally significant New Town buildings. These are known as ‘non-designated heritage assets’ in national planning policy, and sometimes referred to as ‘locally listed’.

This document sets out selection criteria for the identification of the assets for the New Town Heritage Register, based on relevant guidance produced by Historic England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the New Town *Statement of Significance* produced by Alan Baxter Ltd.

The assessment categories for adding assets to the New Town Heritage Register are divided by location or type:

- Central Milton Keynes,
- Residential Areas,
- Employment Areas,
- Landscapes, and
- Public Artworks.

The selection criteria for adding assets to the New Town Heritage Register are split into two categories: required and general. In order to be added to the New Town Heritage Register, an asset must fulfil all of the required criteria and three of the general criteria.

The required criteria are that the asset is:

- a building, structure and/or landscape,
- completed 1967–92 (during the era of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation),
- within the New Town designated area, and
- sufficiently intact.

The general criteria are based on the architectural, historical and communal values of Milton Keynes set out in the *Statement of Significance*.

Based on the selection criteria, and associated nomination form, assets will be added to the New Town Heritage Register.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and structure of report

This report has been prepared by Alan Baxter Ltd for Milton Keynes Council.

It is the second of two documents commissioned to inform the initial stages of the production of the Heritage Register of locally significant New Town buildings. The first document, *Statement of Significance*, summarises the historical development of Milton Keynes under the Development Corporation, 1967–92, outlines the constituent parts of the New Town, and assesses its heritage significance.

This document builds on the Statement of Significance to propose a list of selection criteria (chapter 2.0) for adding assets to the Heritage Register.

For more information on local heritage listing, please see Local Heritage Listing. Historic England Advice Note 7 (Historic England 2016, available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>).

1.2 Methodology and assessment area

This report is based on site visits carried out in January–April 2017; primary and secondary sources (as listed in Appendix 1); a meeting on 7 March 2017 with representatives of Milton Keynes Forum and Milton Keynes Heritage Association; a roundtable discussion with former MK planners, architects and surveyors on 6 April 2017 arranged by MK Forum and hosted by MK Council; and a seminar organised by the Fred Roche Foundation on 21 April 2017.

This report has been revised following public engagement on the July 2017 version from 24 July to 15 September 2017. We are particularly thankful to the helpful responses from MK Forum, CMK Town Council and the Parks Trust.

The assessment area is the designated New Town boundary and the historical scope is the era of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC), 1967–92.



2.0 Selection Criteria

2.1 Identifying non-designated heritage assets

The New Town Heritage Register is a list of what are described in national planning policy as ‘non-designated heritage assets’.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) defines a heritage asset as:

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

Historic England has published an advice note on Local Heritage Listing (2016). This advises the use of selection criteria to justify an asset’s inclusion on a local heritage list, and suggests some selection criteria commonly used by local planning authorities to identify non-designated heritage assets. These have informed the selection criteria for the New Town Heritage Register set out in this chapter.

The selection criteria for statutorily listed buildings (a type of designated heritage asset) are also instructive for identifying non-designated heritage assets. These are split into general *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings* (Department for Media, Culture and Sport, 2010) and specific selection guides published by Historic England, based on building type.

The general principles for statutorily listing buildings are special architectural and historic interest:

- *Architectural Interest. To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;*
- *Historic Interest. To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation’s social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing.*

These are broadly synonymous with the values put forward by Historic England in Conservation Principles (2008): aesthetic value (architectural interest), historical value and communal value (historic interest). These values are used to identify the significance of Milton Keynes New Town in the Statement of Significance (Alan Baxter Ltd, 2017).

2.2 Explanation of selection criteria

In order to be added to the New Town Heritage Register, an asset must fulfil all of the required criteria (2.3) and three of the general criteria (2.4).

Assessment categories (2.5–2.9) are provided to give additional guidance on the application of the selection criteria to different types of assets:

Central Milton Keynes (CMK)

This applies to all assets within the area of CMK between the roads H5 to the north, H6 to the south, the Grand Union Canal to the east and the railway line to the west (with the exception of Landscapes and Public Artworks, which should be assessed under their respective categories below).

Residential Areas

This applies to all assets within the grid squares and historic settlements outside the area of CMK defined above (with the exception of Employment Areas, Landscapes and Public Artworks, which should be assessed under their respective categories below).

Employment Areas

This applies to all assets within employment areas outside the area of CMK defined above (with the exception of Landscapes and Public Artworks, which should be assessed under their respective categories below). Examples of employment areas include Blakelands, Tongwell, Kiln Farm and Stacey Bushes.

Landscapes

This applies to all designed landscapes.

Public Artworks

This applies to all public artworks.

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY

SELECT ONE FOR EACH ASSET

Central Milton Keynes

- CMK1 CMK public realm
- CMK2 Buildings by MKDC architects' department
- CMK3 Buildings by Buckinghamshire County Council
- CMK4 1970s buildings by private architects
- CMK5 Significant 1980–92 buildings by private architects

Residential Areas

- RES1 Locally distinctive public realm
- RES2 Significant housing in formal layouts
- RES3 Significant housing in informal layouts
- RES4 Significant individual houses
- RES5 Significant community buildings

Employment Areas

- EMP1 Significant employment buildings

Landscapes

- LAN1 Significant landscapes

Public Artworks

- ART1 Significant public artworks

REQUIRED CRITERIA

ASSET MUST FULFIL ALL

- Building, structure or landscape (or combination)
- Completed 1967–92 (the MKDC era)
- Within New Town boundary
- Sufficiently intact

GENERAL CRITERIA

ASSET MUST FULFIL THREE

- GEN1 Design quality
- GEN2 Group and townscape quality
- GEN3 Innovation and influence
- GEN4 Significant architect or designer
- GEN5 Rarity
- GEN6 Communal value

2.3 Required criteria

In order to be added to the New Town Heritage Register, an asset must be one (or a combination) of the following types.

Building

This can be an individual building, a group of buildings, or one of several connected buildings (e.g. one house in a terrace).

Structure

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Underpasses
- Street furniture: benches, lamp posts, planters
- Public artworks.

Landscape

Landscapes must be 'designed': i.e. have some element of conscious human manipulation as part of the design of Milton Keynes New Town. This can range from formal planting to the landscaping of earthworks, as well as areas of hard landscaping.

In addition, the asset must:

- have been **completed between 1967–92**. Consideration may be given to buildings which were under construction in 1992
- be located **within the designated New Town boundary** (see map on p.2)
- be **sufficiently intact** so as to understand the intentions of its designer, i.e. it must not have been overly compromised by later alterations.

2.4 General criteria

GEN1 Design quality

- Does the asset have particular aesthetic or functional qualities as a result of its conscious design which make it above average for the period?
- Does it demonstrate a distinctive local architectural style, use of materials, or other characteristics?
- To have design quality, the asset must have been fit for purpose when assessed against its original brief and the standards of the time
- All artworks will satisfy this criteria.

GEN2 Group and townscape quality

- Has specific design consideration been given to its relationship with nearby buildings, structures and landscapes? Is this aesthetically successful?
- Does the asset stand out as a local landmark?

GEN3 Innovation and influence

- Does the asset demonstrate an important step e.g. in building technology or landscape design? Did it respond to a new planning requirement or need?
- Was it an early (or the first) example of its type in Milton Keynes, or nationally?
- It is an example of an innovative programme by MKDC? E.g. self-build housing, energy-saving design, community artworks.
- Was it influential locally or nationally? Was it widely published in the trade press when completed?
- Has it been mentioned in books and articles since construction? E.g. does it feature in 'Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire'?

GEN4 Significant architect or designer

- Is the asset the work of a locally (e.g. MKDC architects' department) or nationally or internationally significant architect or designer?

GEN5 Rarity

- Is the asset a rare surviving example of its type, locally or nationally?
- Is the asset an example of an uncommon type in MK? E.g. community buildings.

GEN6 Communal value

- Does the asset have a particular cultural or social meaning, locally or nationally?
- Did it play an important part in a historic event, or does it feature in artwork, films or books?

2.5 Central Milton Keynes

CMK1 CMK public realm

Public realm features in CMK are the single most significant contributor to its distinctive and consistent character as an architectural set-piece.

All public realm features in CMK purpose-designed by MKDC will warrant inclusion on the Heritage Register. High quality areas of hard landscaping may also be suitable for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

CMK2 Buildings by MKDC architects' department

MKDC played the fundamental role in the planning and delivery of the architectural set-piece of CMK, which is one of the most significant aspects of the New Town. All civic, office and leisure buildings designed by MKDC architects' department in CMK will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

CMK3 Buildings by Buckinghamshire County Council

Civic buildings in CMK make a key contribution to the architectural and communal identity of the New Town. All public buildings designed by Buckinghamshire County Council in CMK will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

CMK4 1970s buildings by private architects

Few buildings were built in CMK during the 1970s, when its development as an architectural set-piece was most strongly guided by MKDC. All 1970s buildings in CMK by private architects will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register, due to their rarity.

CMK5 Significant 1980–92 buildings by private architects

Buildings in CMK by private architects after 1980 were largely undistinguished as there was growing deviation from the planning rules imposed by MKDC. These will only warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register if they demonstrate the local distinctiveness of CMK, e.g. through the use of architectural elements imposed by MKDC, or are of high significance in other ways.

Approach to CMK Public Realm

Specific criteria CMK1 CMK Public Realm seeks to identify and protect the significant aspects of CMK's public realm by ensuring that it is added to the Heritage Register. This does not include the buildings of CMK which will have to be assessed separately and individually under criteria CMK2–CMK5.

CMK has a unique and instantly-recognisable character which stems from the consistent and high quality design of its public realm. Its importance is recognised in the Milton Keynes Futures 2050 Commission report as 'a world-class example of very successful civic design in the 20th century' (p.49).

This total work of conscious design encompasses its rectilinear planning, rigorous urban design and generous landscaping. It can be read in a series of layers extending from the tree-lined grid roads and planted verges to the underlying network of pedestrian routes, with their granite steps, upstands and underpasses, to the street furniture such as benches, porte-cocheres, railings and lamp posts: all of which were purpose-designed by MKDC.

The all-encompassing nature of this highly significant public realm in CMK raises some interesting questions about how it can be most efficiently and helpfully be included in the New Town Heritage Register. Not only does it cover a very large geographical area, but the significant features within it are identical, repeated examples of the same design.

2.6 Residential Areas

RES1 Locally distinctive public realm

The provision of public realm is a significant aspect of the New Town, especially where its design contributes to local distinctiveness between grid squares.

Public realm features which demonstrate this may warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register. High quality areas of hard landscaping may also be suitable for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

RES2 Significant housing in formal layouts &

RES3 Significant housing in informal layouts

There is a huge quantity and variety of housing in MK and indeed the diversity and local identities of the grid squares are important contributors to the significance of the New Town. A high degree of selectivity is required and only the best examples are likely to warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

For all housing types, significance will be highest where there is evidence of innovative building techniques, materials or plan-forms, especially if these were nationally influential. Designs by MKDC architects' departments or nationally important private practices will add to significance.

For housing in formal grid squares, intactness of original form and materials to demonstrate the design concept, is likely to be the determining factor. The significance of housing in informal grid squares is less easily harmed by extensions and alterations, but is likely to rely considerably on very high design quality and group and townscape quality, especially the relationship with the layout of roads, pedestrian routes, hard landscaping and planting.

RES4 Significant individual houses

Individual houses are likely to warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register where they are of high design, group and townscape quality and the work of a significant architect or designer. Another key criteria might be innovation or influence, e.g. as part of MK's self-build programme, or one of its housing exhibitions.

RES5 Significant community buildings

The provision of community buildings is an important aspect of the significance of the residential grid squares, and contributes to the distinctive local character of MK. All churches, schools, meeting places, local centres and other community buildings will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register.

Their significance is likely to be highest when they demonstrate the distinctive architectural style of the grid square, as local landmarks, or have particularly strong communal value.

2.7 Employment Areas

EMP1 Significant employment buildings

The provision of employment buildings was a significant part of the output of MKDC architects' department, including the 'System Building for Industry' programme for Advance Factory Units.

Design quality and innovation and influence are likely to be the key considerations. All 1970s buildings by MKDC architects' department will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register; after that increasing selectivity will be required. Buildings by private architects are less likely to be sufficiently significant, but there may be some exceptions.

2.8 Landscapes

LAN1 Significant landscapes

Significant designed landscapes will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register. The key considerations are likely to be design quality, group and townscape quality and significant architect or designer.

2.9 Public Artworks

ART1 Significant public artworks

Significant public artworks will warrant consideration for inclusion on the Heritage Register. The key considerations are likely to be design quality, group and townscape quality and significant architect or designer.

Appendix Sources

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