

Milton Keynes New Town Heritage Register: Frequently Asked Questions, March 2023

Local Lists

What is the New Town Heritage Register (NTHR)?

The NTHR is a 'local list'. Local heritage – whether buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, historic parks and gardens or other designed landscapes – plays an essential role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness.

The bar for post-war places to become nationally listed (i.e. a listed building) is particularly high. Local lists are designed to formally capture those buildings and places that do not meet the national criteria but are important to the local character and heritage of an area.

Milton Keynes is the last, largest and most ambitious of all the settlements to be created under the 1946 New Towns Act. The combination of its scale, distinctive grid layout and architectural, landscape-driven design will never be seen again in this country. The first 25 years of its life reflected not only the changing fashions of post-war and late twentieth century architecture, planning and art, but it tells the story of the changing economic, political and social circumstances of the UK through the period. It is the *locally* important buildings, artworks, landscapes, infrastructure and places of the new town era that the NTHR seeks to capture.

Overview

The public have nominated those assets it feels are locally important to Milton Keynes' new town heritage. We began asking for further feedback on the first phase of these assets in November 2022. We are currently bringing this engagement to a conclusion with direct consultation with commercial property owners. Following this, the Selection Panel (see below) will consider the first phase of nominations and make recommendations to Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC / the Council). A formal decision will be made by the Council taking into account the recommendations of the panel. A second phase will then be brought forward via the same method.

Current Consultation

How were the assets nominated?

We asked the public to put forward those parts of Milton Keynes that they thought were important to its new town heritage and met the [adopted selection criteria](#). We received over 200 nominations, and these are now being brought forward for consideration by the selection panel in two phases.

Why have these places been nominated?

We asked for nominations to be accompanied by a rationale as to why they are important to Milton Keynes. Some nominations came with a specific explanation as to why the nominee felt they were important. Others were accompanied with more limited information. We are continuing to collate information on the potential heritage significance of these places to inform the recommendations made by the selection panel.

Some nominations include just the buildings, others go beyond that - how has the extent of each nomination been determined?

Some nominations were designed to be a single entity, a standalone building or artwork, for example. Others are larger schemes where the spaces and landscapes between and around them were part of the original design. The boundaries currently shown reflect the nature of each scheme, however, the selection panel can recommend that a boundary is altered if considered appropriate, including taking account of any responses made through consultation.

When did you begin consulting on the first phase of nominations?

In mid-November 2022 we invited the public and owners to comment on the first phase of nominations. We have received a good response relating to a variety of the nominated places. We received feedback that we should do more to directly engage the owners of commercial properties who were less likely to be aware of the existing publicity. To that end we are now contacting those commercial property owners directly that we have not already heard from or contacted. This will draw the ongoing consultation to a close in late April 2023.

What are the legal requirements for consultations on local lists / the NTHR?

There is no legal requirement to consult on local lists. However, we want to ensure that those who wish to input into the process have been able to do so. As such we have endeavoured to engage different groups through a variety of methods, from posters in and around the nominated assets, through to social media and direct communication with property owners.

How will the register be maintained and can we nominate further assets?

Yes, assets can be nominated at any time by email to conservationarchaeology@milton-keynes.gov.uk. Nominations must be accompanied with a case as to why they meet the [adopted](#)

[selection criteria](#). Nominations will typically be taken through in groups. Any new nominations received will be considered as part of a future group, i.e. not the current one.

What does being added to the New Town Heritage Register mean for my property?

Will this impact on my ability to make changes to my house / commercial property?

Being on the NTHR leaves any existing permitted development rights intact and unchanged. This means that any works which currently do not require planning permission will continue not to need it. There are no additional controls in respect of planning permission being required.

There are however local and national planning policies that relate specifically to non-designated heritage assets (assets added to the register will become non-designated heritage assets). This is likely to be of greater relevance to non-domestic buildings that do not currently have, or have limited, permitted development rights.

Where planning permission is required, the heritage significance is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material planning considerations. Non-designated heritage assets do not have the same statutory duties that apply to listed buildings and do not carry the same weight in planning decision as designated heritage assets (scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens etc.).

A nominated property has previously had planning permission to be demolished or altered; is this affected? Why is it being considered for the NTHR?

Some nominations may have approved development schemes that completely remove or significantly alter them.

Assets that have already been demolished cannot be considered for the NTHR. However, a record of their prior existence may be presented alongside other entries, to help give a complete picture of Milton Keynes in the new town era and shown how it has changed over its life. These will be clearly differentiated from those on the register.

Assets that have been altered in a way that removes their heritage significance are unlikely to meet the criteria requiring that they are sufficiently intact.

Where an extant (i.e. not lapsed) planning permission exists for demolition or alteration of a building or place, being added to the register has no effect on that existing permission.

Whilst a planning permission for the demolition of a building might have been granted, this does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented. Whilst a building remains and contributes to Milton Keynes it can be considered as part of the new town era heritage and, as above, it does not impact upon previous permissions.

If my property is added to the NTHR, will I need to submit a heritage statement when applying for planning permission?

Yes. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *“local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”*. This requirement is echoed by the local plan, Plan:MK.

However, both confirm that the level of detail should *“be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”*. Chapter 16 of the NPPF and chapter 13 of Plan:MK contain further information on heritage statements.

Will Milton Keynes City Council be introducing article 4 directions for those places added to the register?

Article 4 directions are used to withdraw permitted development (PD) rights that allow owners to undertake works without requiring planning permission. Aside from article 4 directions, commercial properties generally have very limited permitted development rights. Article 4 directions will be given consideration, however there is no intention to take a ‘blanket’ approach. It is anticipated that there will in fact be few places where an article 4 direction is considered necessary.

Will the Council have additional powers should my property be added to the register but fall into disrepair?

No. Unlike listed buildings, there are no new statutory or additional powers provided in relation those places that are on the register / non-designated heritage assets and ‘at risk’.

Next steps

What happens after this first group of nominations? What is the wider programme?

The selection panel will consider the first group of nominations in late May 2023, making recommendations on whether nominations meet the [adopted selection criteria](#) or not. Milton Keynes City Council will use these recommendations as a basis to add selected assets to the NTHR by delegated decision in June 2023.

Work to present and promote those assets added to the NTHR will begin alongside bringing forward a second group of around 80 nominated assets for consideration. It is hoped that this second group can be brought before the selection panel towards the end of 2023.

The Selection Panel

How will the panel make recommendations to MKCC?

The panel will vote on each nomination with a majority vote required. It will consider any information submitted with the original nomination, information presented by MKCC officers and information submitted through public and owner consultation. Any changes to the nomination recommended e.g. its boundary, description or name, will be recorded along with the key reasons for the decision to add / not add. These will be reflected in the final delegated decision report.

Can the panel members vote on all nominations being considered?

Terms of reference are yet to be formally agreed, however panel members will be required to declare any interest they have for each nomination. Where the panel member has an interest relating to ownership, having designed the building or nominated it, that member will be excluded from voting on a recommendation, but can contribute to the discussion on the asset.

Who is on the panel?

Details of the members will be available separately on the [NTHR page](#) of the Council's website. Members are mix of national and local experts and stakeholders.

When will the panel meet to consider nominations?

The panel will meet in late May / early June 2023.

Technical

The adopted selection criteria and statement of significance date from 2017, are these still considered relevant?

Since these documents were produced, planning policy and guidance has been revised. Principally, the National Planning Policy Framework has been amended as has Historic England's Advice Note 7: *Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage*. Locally, Plan:MK (local plan) was adopted in 2019. Officers have reviewed the documents against the revised policy and guidance and consider it to remain compliant.