

Chapter 7 Heritage and Culture

Policy HC 1 Heritage, Conservation and Growth

It is not possible to think of the spatial planning of London, with respect to heritage and culture, without factoring in the heritage and culture of the diverse populations who have made parts of London their own and conferred unique cultures of trade, music, arts and food, unique to them and shaping the way in which a place is understood.

It is therefore quite wrong to speak of the historic culture and heritage of London without referring to these things, yet this is what this chapter has done. It sets the tone for a 'development' of London which ignores the culture of its current citizens and treats history, the idea of heritage as a history that is now dead and past, not as the living culture and heritage that continues.

This raises significant questions. What is culture and who is culture for? Who decides what is worthy of cultural and heritage protection? Do the sites listed in the London Plan provide a fair representation of all cultural practices and spaces in London?

The policies in this chapter must reflect a shared heritage, open and accessible to people of different ages, genders and cultures. The lack of understanding of community grassroots culture has led Just Space, in conjunction with UCL, to develop a framework for auditing cultural and community assets at a local, neighbourhood level and to do this in a way that deepens our awareness of the challenges they face.

Changes

Add to B4 "in a manner which reflects the local values of all communities which have helped shape its heritage value."

Add to E "in consultation with local community representation" and collaboratively set out strategies.

To the series of maps in this section a further map should be added: to indicate those community assets which contribute to the place-making of a location(s) within London, identifying those which are under threat and those which have disappeared in the last five and ten years. Tools for consulting communities are available to provide place based knowledge for identifying and making visible the diversity of cultural and heritage assets so that they are fully incorporated into future planning and decision making. These include participatory mapping that ensures local communities of place and identity are fully involved. (see Just Space /Just Map collaborations)

Map of community assets in Tottenham :

https://justplace.carto.com/viz/5a7af762-1604-11e7-a420-0ecd1babdde5/embed_map

Map of community assets in South-Kilburn :

https://justplace.carto.com/viz/07d68176-7504-41cc-9362-7bf651971215/embed_map

Map of community assets in Walworth:

https://justplace.carto.com/viz/39b94702-92db-44cf-80c5-1b0678612066/embed_map

Policy HC 2 World Heritage Sites

The concern is with iconic cultural venues, great culture, world class culture. There is a need to recognise alternative and multi-cultural forms of heritage. For example, Chinatown, Soho, Seven Sisters, Latin Elephant, Brixton, Ladbroke Grove, Shepherds Bush, Brick Lane, Southall.

Policy HC1A stresses “conserving”, “enhancing” the heritage assets, and “improving access to” them. The plan should clearly demonstrate how the above would be measured and understood. Moreover,, the plan aims to protect existing culture venues (HC5A) but this can often come into conflict with other policies such as HC7.1.6 which proposes that cultural venues can be enhanced or creatively used. More attention must be given to ensuring harmony between policies. It is essential to stress a balance between recognizing social value and creating business opportunities. The latter should not impinge on the former. Greater thought should be given to the accessibility of heritage and cultural sites to ensure that they remain open, inviting and accessible to all members of society, regardless of ethnicity, gender, ability or sexual orientation.

Policy HC5 Culture and creative industries

This policy encourages the boroughs to evaluate unique and important cultural assets. There is no specification of what forms of activities should be encouraged, though there is an emphasis on the business driven aspects of cultural consumption for economic growth purposes and tourism which is limiting.

Little attention is given to matters of community inclusion and participation. There is a need to instead engage with local forms of production and knowledge, taking into account community knowledge and opinion in meaningful ways, to further identify culture with community value rather than top down financialised agendas.

An important issue touched upon in the non-policy box highlights the intensification of land and the difficulties of maintaining it for cultural spaces (HC5 7.5.3). We believe this potentially negative impact of intensification processes needs more attention and scrutiny and should be in the policy box.

Changes (to be added to the policy and text)

London's cultural offer is also informed by a historical legacy of Britain's diverse communities, their lifestyles, culture and faiths, including, importantly, their food culture. This also includes venues in which London's diverse communities celebrate their cultural calendars, births, weddings and deaths and hold community meetings to foster social cohesion, integration and well-being.

Essential spaces for cultural production also include community centres, restaurants, cafes, meeting spaces, theatres, as well as pubs, clubs and music venues.

All requirements must be in consultation with relevant community organisations.

The lack of community spaces in which to plan and organise many outdoor 'free' events might mean they disappear entirely or are poorly planned and resourced. For this reason Councils must support community spaces.

Cultural Quarters are also important in supporting the coherence, integration and survival of diverse communities and the creation of Lifetime Neighbourhoods. We refer to the campaign for a Latin Quarter at the Elephant and Castle.

Boroughs, in collaboration with the relevant community organisations should identify Cultural Quarters and other strategic clusters of cultural attractions in their Local Plans. The food culture of these communities is often what they are symbolised by and as such attention must be given to supporting this aspect through the creation and maintenance of food hubs and market places.

Policy HC 6 Night time economy

The term *appropriate* is subjective and requires more context and background to be effectively used. We must question exactly what type of space is and will be considered appropriate for the night time economy, particularly where the night time economy is being expanded to new and potentially residential areas

The policy excessively stresses improving the economy and attracting visitors, but it is necessary to consider how the quality and convenience of life can be improved in the context of supporting the night-time economy .

The growing emphasis on the night-time economy may reduce the amount of community space that is used to deliver social value and the policy should include safeguards to prevent this happening.

Change

7. Protect, support and promote family-friendly cultural venues that are open all day and weekend, including those that apply to minority communities, such

as temples, mosques and other places of worship, community centres and food outlets that sell healthy ethnic food offerings and support local food hubs.

Policy HC 7 Protecting public houses

We welcome this protection of pubs, but for the policy to be sound it must be extended to a wide range of community assets, such as libraries, community centres, youth centres, music venues, open spaces and public spaces, land for community food growing and street markets. Many community spaces across London have been lost in recent years and others are under threat of closure through a combination of austerity, privatisation and development pressure.

The policy refers to heritage, economic, social or cultural value as the reason for protection. There needs to be more work done on understanding how to effectively measure the social value of pubs. Otherwise economic value may be the dominant criteria and push out wider policy objectives.

Ownership of these community assets needs to be addressed, so that community owned pubs (for example, Ivy House in Nunhead) are valued alongside large pub conglomerates. There is also the need for greater clarity and transparency in regard to the process by which pubs are awarded the status of 'Assets of Community Value' (ACV). The plan mentions ACVs but not in much detail and should provide a link to guidance that will equip communities with the legal and practical knowledge required to achieve such protection. There should be Mayoral funding to support community bids for the ownership of these assets, in the same way as the Mayor is supporting community led housing.

Changes

The policy and text need to refer to community spaces throughout.

Where there is reference to the needs of particular groups (7.7.2) this should include London's diverse ethnic communities.