

6 BUILDING CONSERVATION AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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Building Conservation Facts:

- o Greater emphasis is being placed on good design by Government.
- o There are currently 22 Conservation Areas on the Island.
- o There are over 2,000 listed structures, mostly Grade II.
- o Most of the Island's churches are listed.
- o Ryde and Ventnor have the greatest number of Listed Buildings.

Introduction

6.1 The Government states that it is vital that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment. The physical remnants of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our culture and heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes to our understanding of both the present and the past. The presence of historic buildings and areas undoubtedly adds to the quality of our lives.

6.2 PPG15 on Planning and the Historic Environment states that local planning authorities, through their plans and policies, should encourage the reuse of neglected historic buildings and the protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

Listed Buildings

6.3 Certain buildings are listed by the Secretary of State for the Environment if they are considered to be of special architectural or historic interest. Buildings are assessed under national guidelines and are classified into different grades:

Grade I Buildings of exceptional interest

Grade II* Particularly important buildings of special national interest

Grade II Buildings of special interest which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

6.4 Most Listed Buildings are Grade II and range from large public buildings to small cottages. Works which affect Listed Buildings are controlled by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990,

and Listed Building Consent will be necessary for any works of demolition, alteration or extension which affect the character of a building of special architectural or historic interest.

6.5 To this end the Council attaches the utmost importance to the preservation and protection of some 2,000 listed structures currently on the statutory list of Island buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest. As well as planning approval, Listed Building Consent is required in respect of any works, including alterations, both internal and external, or demolition of a Listed Building or within the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building. Consents for Grade I and II* buildings are dealt with by the Secretary of State.

6.6 In pursuit of its policies, the Council may take appropriate legal action including repairs notices, emergency repairs, compulsory purchase or Building

Preservation Notices to preserve buildings and structures and to prevent deterioration where it appears this is a first step towards their ultimate demolition.

Conservation Areas

6.7 It is the duty of local planning authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The designation of a Conservation Area is a recognition of the group value of buildings and their settings including street pattern, building layout, open spaces, trees and landscape. The Council is required under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to produce schemes for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas, which will be considered as and when resources permit.

Conservation Area Assessments

There are 22 Conservation Areas on the Island and they are shown on the Proposals Map.

The primary object in designating a Conservation Area is to protect the character of that area. Before defining the boundaries it is important that the character is identified in some detail, and that the boundaries include only that which is to be preserved. It is also necessary in order that new applications within the area can be assessed as to their impact on this character.

Appraisals have been carried out on the existing Conservation Areas, considering such topics as style and materials, character and hierarchy of spaces, important views and vistas, landscaping, traffic and parking and perceived problems. Based on these assessments it should be possible to formulate a strategy for preserving and enhancing the Conservation Area, particularly identifying the eyesores for attention, those buildings out of scale, character and context and also those sites where development opportunities exist.

The standard of design in any development control work in the Conservation Area should also be raised, if the appraisals are properly used, and should form part of a management plan for the Conservation Area. These appraisals will take the form of supplementary guidance to the Unitary Development Plan and will enable them to be monitored and reassessed where necessary.

Objectives:

The objectives of this section are:

- o to promote, protect and enhance the historic built environment and its setting;
- o to ensure the appropriate detailing and use of traditional building methods and materials;
- o to ensure uses of historic buildings are appropriate;

- o to consider future Conservation Area designation;
- o to protect Listed Buildings against demolition and inappropriate alteration.

Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings

B1 Alterations and extensions affecting Listed Buildings and their curtilages will be approved provided the scheme:

- a is in accordance with the period, style, plan, scale, detail and material of the existing building or structure;*
- b retains and repairs the original fabric and features, or replaces features that are missing;*
- c does not harm the fabric or stability of the building or adjoining buildings and structures;*
- d provides sufficient detail on the use of materials and building techniques;*
- e is carried out in strict accordance with the approved plans;*
- f takes regard of the archaeology of the building and its setting.*

6.8 The best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active use. This may require some degree of adaption, by way of alterations and extensions. In this respect, it is important that policies recognise the need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered to secure the survival of a building. The Council will seek to ensure that any alterations and extensions are kept to a minimum and relate sensitively to the existing building in terms of scale, architectural detailing and materials, and that integral and below ground archaeological features are not needlessly disturbed.

6.9 Annex C of PPG15 provides guidance on alterations to Listed Buildings. The Council is required to control any works to a listed building which in any way would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Repair to the historic fabric of a building is always preferred to replacement, and should be carried out with matching materials and in an authentic manner. The Hampshire and IW Conservation Group gives guidance on acceptable extensions to Listed Buildings, provided all other criteria are met.

Settings of Listed Buildings

B2 Proposals which adversely affect the appearance, setting and/or the curtilage of a Listed Building will not be permitted.

6.10 Unsympathetic development may seriously detract from the appearance and/or setting of a Listed Building. The relationship between the building and its surroundings can often be as important as the detailing of the structure itself, particularly when related to nearby open spaces, vistas, prominent

sites and buildings. It is important therefore to consider the wider impact of development on adjoining land and buildings. The curtilage is defined as that land around the building or structure which historically relates to it.

6.11 A number of Listed Buildings are at

Change of Use of Listed Buildings

B3 Planning applications for the change of use of Listed Buildings will be approved provided that the alternative will not detrimentally affect the long-term structure of the building and would preserve any historic, archaeological or special architectural features it possesses.

risk and in poor condition, particularly where their original uses are no longer viable or they have been left empty. The Council does not wish to encourage inappropriate or potentially

harmful uses solely to secure improvements to a Listed Building but, in certain cases, change of use which enhances the historic building, or facilitates its maintenance, may

be considered. Additionally, there may be buildings which are occupied by potentially harmful uses where there is a need to allow change which will ensure the building's long term survival. PPG15 states that when considering the use, or change of use, of a Listed Building, the principal aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting

of the historic building. It is important to ensure that proposed alterations are minimal and sympathetic to the building's character. The Council will continue to encourage the reuse of vacant Listed Buildings to ensure their retention and restoration.

6.12 Listed Buildings form an important part of the Island's heritage and there will

Demolition of Listed Buildings

B4 Development proposals which positively protect and enhance the character of the Listed Buildings will be approved. There is a general presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings. In exceptional circumstances when demolition is being considered, the Council will take into account the following points and will refuse an application if they are not adequately addressed:

- a the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use;*
- b the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use;*
- c the merits of alternative proposals for the site.*

Any planning permission will be conditional upon the signing of a contract for ensuring appropriate redevelopment, prior to the demolition of the building.

always be a presumption in favour of their preservation, protection and enhancement. In exceptional circumstances the Council, with consultation of English Heritage may allow the demolition of a listed building unless it is called in to a Public Inquiry where the decision lies in the hands of the Secretary of State. Before consideration can be given to the demolition of a listed building, certain criteria should be fulfilled.

6.13 Para 3.19 of PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment states that where proposed works would result in the total or substantial demolition of a listed building, or any significant part of it, the Secretary of State would expect the Authority to address the following considerations:

- i the condition of the building, the cost

- of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use;
- i the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in its use;
- ii the merits of alternative proposals for the site.

6.14 Council policies aim to encourage the replacement of the building using the original materials wherever possible. In certain circumstances, demolition will lead to unacceptable gaps in the street scene detrimental both to adjoining buildings and the character of the area. It is therefore important that not only has a sensitive replacement been proposed, but that Listed Building Consent will be conditional upon a contract for acceptable redevelopment being let prior to demolition of the building.

Criteria for the Designation of New, and Review of Existing Conservation Areas

B5 The following criteria for the designation of new, or the revision of existing, Conservation Areas must be complied with:

- a the area has a distinct physical character that is distinguishable from the surrounding development or land;*
- b the area possesses a cohesive quality in terms of its architecture and general environment;*
- c the buildings within the area are of a high standard of architectural or townscape quality, which may include not only groups of Listed Buildings, but also structures, landmarks*

- and other good examples of local vernacular, such as town squares, ornamental gardens, etc;*
- d the landscape, spatial qualities and layout are derived from a natural or topographical feature, historic open space, landscape or street pattern.*

6.15 Paragraph 2.9 of PPG15 explains that Plans should set out authorities' broad criteria for the designation of new conservation areas and the review of existing conservation area boundaries. The process of assessment, detailed definition or revision of boundaries, and formulation of proposals for individual conservation areas (as required by Section 71 of the Act) should involve extensive public consultation and should be pursued separately from the local plan process itself. The existing conservation

areas on the Island exhibit a wide variety of styles, sizes, concentrations of buildings and open spaces. There are, however, common criteria which apply to all conservation areas and these provide the basis for the policy. The aim of the policy is to make it clear how detailed assessment documents and statements for individual Conservation Areas relate to the plan. The most recently designated Conservation Area is that of Norton Green, Freshwater, which was approved on 30 April 1996.

Protection and Enhancement of Conservation Areas

B6 Planning applications which preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas will be approved. Development involving the removal of buildings, structures, walls, trees and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance will not be permitted.

6.16 In considering proposed development in Conservation Areas, the Council will have regard to factors that contribute to the particular character of that area. In particular, development will be expected to protect and enhance the special quality and integrity of the Conservation Area. In some areas it will be important to ensure the retention of a particular uniform style, design, proportion, or material. Also of importance will be the detail of floor to ceiling heights, vertical or horizontal emphasis and window spacing which, individually or cumulatively, could affect sensitive street scenes. While the modification or removal of some features may fall outside planning controls the Council may consider using directions under Article 4 of

the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, to bring removal or alteration within planning control where these make a contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

6.17 The Council will expect full and detailed planning applications in order to assess the impact of development on Conservation Areas and will positively encourage partnership with conservation bodies. The Council will also endeavour to help with grant-aiding of repairs where this is possible.

6.18 Within Conservation Areas, the demolition of most structures and buildings

Demolition of Non-Listed Buildings In Conservation Areas

B7 Applications involving Conservation Area Consent to demolish non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas will only be approved where the existing building does not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and:

- a where, if appropriate, there is a satisfactory redevelopment proposal for the site with detailed planning approval and a contract to build has been entered into; and*
- b where the proposed replacement building would either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.*

requires Conservation Area Consent. In many cases demolition would detract from the area's character, and in some sensitive areas even one building lost can have a dramatic impact. The Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. The fact that a proposed replacement is an improvement on the

existing building will not, in itself, be considered a justification for approval. It is expected that the redevelopment, should preserve and enhance the area's character, and in all cases, Conservation Area Consent will not be granted until detailed plans have been received and accepted as part of the planning application.

Alteration and Extension of Non-Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas

B8 Planning applications for alterations and extensions to non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas will be approved where:

- a they are sensitively designed and appropriate to the particular character of a Conservation Area;*
- b they are of a minor nature on front elevations, or located on rear, side or minor façades;*
- c they preserve characteristic features such as doors, windows, roof-scapes and building detail;*
- d traditional materials and finishes are used.*

In exceptional cases, roof extensions may be permitted where they are acceptable in relation to the period and character of the building and surrounding area.

6.19 Buildings within Conservation Areas generally have a collective architectural character which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Because of this, the Council will ensure that proposals complement the appearance of the Conservation Area, while allowing occupiers to meet their particular needs. Extensions, for example, are best placed on the rear of buildings where they are likely to be less visible to the public. The Council considers it appropriate to require a high standard of design, quality of materials

and skill and technical ability in construction when assessing proposals.

6.20 Development proposals in Conservation Areas must give a high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. Special regard should be given to scale, height, form, massing, respect for traditional pattern of frontages, vertical or horizontal emphasis and detailed design, ie. nature of materials. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances to use Article 4 directions.

The Historic Environment

Protection of Archaeological Heritage

B9 Development proposals which are likely to adversely affect the archaeological heritage and features of the Island, directly or indirectly, will not be permitted. Planning applications will be approved provided that:

- a where nationally important remains or their settings are affected by proposed development, permission will only be granted if it will preserve or enhance the archaeological features; on these and other important sites, development which would damage the site or its setting will not be permitted;**
- b where proposed development may damage or destroy archaeological remains, the Council will require the developer to submit, prior to determination, the results of an archaeological assessment, which may include field evaluation;**
- c where development is proposed at a location which is likely to affect an archaeological site or its setting, permission may exceptionally be granted if preservation of archaeological remains in situ can be achieved by the careful use of appropriate layout, foundations and design;**

d where preservation of archaeological remains in situ is not feasible, the Council will require the developer to submit, prior to determination, proposals which will mitigate the effects of the development on the archaeological remains. Such proposals should include a programme of appropriate archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication which may be undertaken as a condition of planning permission.

6.21 The Island has a rich archaeological heritage which is of historic, scientific and educational importance. The Council will seek to identify all archaeological sites, monuments and areas of archaeological value, including historic landscapes and coastal sites and protect them from damage, decay or loss. When considering proposals for development, the Council will refer to the island Sites and Monuments Record to identify the potential impact on sites of archaeological interest.

6.22 There is a finite number of archaeological sites on the Island, the extent

being unknown, and their preservation is extremely important. In the historic core of the urban area, and in the countryside, there should be a presumption against development which could adversely affect important sites and their settings. Within urban areas, where there is greater pressure to develop, preservation can often be achieved while permitting development by careful design of foundations and services. In cases where preservation in this manner cannot be achieved, the developer will be required to make full provision of a programme of archaeological recording before the development commences.

Sites and Monuments Record

In accordance with Statutory Instrument 1995/418 and PPG16, the Isle of Wight Council maintains a record of all known archaeological sites on the Island. This record, known as the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), is held by the Archaeological Officer and is being continuously developed and enhanced through programmes of fieldwork carried out by the staff of the Archaeological Centre.

The SMR, which currently contains details of more than 2,100 sites, permits both developers and planning authorities to be readily advised of the current state of knowledge regarding archaeology within any particular site. Through fieldwork and analysis, the staff of the unit are beginning to assess and rank the relative importance of the Island's sites whilst a greater understanding of the historic landscape is also being achieved.

Parks and Gardens and Landscapes of Historic Interest

B10 Development proposals which are likely to adversely affect an Historic Park or Garden or Historic Landscape of national or local importance, or its setting, directly or indirectly, will not be permitted.

Planning applications for the restoration of Historic Parks and Gardens will be approved provided they:

- a will not adversely affect their character, appearance, setting, amenity and enjoyment;*
- b are sympathetic and appropriate to their archaeological and historic interest;*
- c do not result in any fragmentation.*

6.23 Archaeological and historic landscape features of the Island are a national, as well as a local, resource of particular social value worthy of good stewardship. On many occasions in the past, the character of the Island's landscape has been modified to create particular visual effects or to achieve a particular purpose. The arrays of Bronze Age burial mounds set

out along the high top contours at such locations as Brook Down and Afton Down are examples; the array of medieval artificial ponds and leats on the floor of the Quarr valley is another. These and other elements of the historic landscape will be identified in the County Sites and Monuments Record so that they may be characterised and protected during the life of the plan. A number of the

most important historic parks and gardens have been included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. These are Appuldurcombe, Norris Castle, Nunwell, Osborne, Swainston and Westover. The register is highly selective, identifying sites of national importance and grading them I, II* and II. It is not exhaustive and the Council is able to put possible additions to English Heritage. Registered sites are of national importance, but the Island has a significant number of other sites of local importance. As part of the overall aim to preserve and enhance these sites of local importance, each site is defined and mapped in the Isle of Wight Local Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes.

6.24 The changing pattern of land use and the loss of landscape features through new farming and forestry practices threaten the remnants of historic landscapes in the countryside and urban development threatens parks and gardens in towns. Local survey work will continue during the plan period, which may identify additional sites to which the policy will apply. Many historic

parks and gardens provide the setting for historic buildings. The relationship between the buildings and the park needs to be recognised and safeguarded.

6.25 Historic Parks and Gardens comprise a variety of features; the open space itself, views in and out, the planting, water features, built features and archaeological remains. There is a need to protect such sites and their settings from new development which would destroy or harm the historic interest and to encourage sympathetic management wherever possible. Thus, apart from historic interest, parks and gardens may contain other facets of interest: archaeological, landscape, architectural, nature conservation, amenity, horticultural and educational. Applications for development within historic parks and gardens will need to be preceded by an environmental impact assessment including a survey of historic interest. Where appropriate, advice on the conservation of historic parks and gardens will be sought from such organisations as the Garden History Society and the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust.