

## Conservation of the Historic Environment



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## A Good Practice Guide for Planners

Prepared by a steering group of the RTPI's  
Conservation and Design in the Historic Environment Panel,  
based on work commissioned from  
Conservation Architecture and Planning,  
the authors of which were  
Jack Warshaw, Stephen Levrant and Philip Grover



The Royal Town Planning Institute

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**The Royal Town Planning Institute**

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# Contents

Foreword		vii
<b>One</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>Conservation defined</i>	1
	<i>Why conserve?</i>	1
	<i>Scope</i>	2
<b>Two</b>	<b>The conservation movement</b>	<b>3</b>
	<i>Origins, early philosophy and achievement</i>	3
	<i>Postwar conservation</i>	3
	<i>Current thinking</i>	5
	<i>Criteria for conservation schemes</i>	5
	<i>International conservation</i>	6
<b>Three</b>	<b>Tools of the trade</b>	<b>7</b>
	<i>The strategy</i>	7
	<i>Values</i>	7
	<i>Mechanisms</i>	8
<b>Four</b>	<b>Defining the historic environment</b>	<b>13</b>
	<i>Statutory duties</i>	13
	<i>Perception</i>	13
	<i>Appraisals</i>	13
	<i>Gathering evidence</i>	15
	<i>Benefits</i>	16
	<i>Resources</i>	16
	<i>National, regional and local factors</i>	18
	<i>Participation</i>	18
	<i>Review</i>	18
<b>Five</b>	<b>Role of the development plan</b>	<b>21</b>
	<i>The process</i>	21
	<i>Co-ordinating land use and conservation policy</i>	21
	<i>Contributing to other programmes</i>	22
	<i>Essential and desirable inputs</i>	22
	<i>Design quality</i>	23
	<i>Engaging the public</i>	23
<b>Six</b>	<b>Applicant and decision-maker</b>	<b>25</b>
	<i>Content of applications: how to determine</i>	25
	<i>Post-application steps</i>	25
	<i>Consultations and referrals</i>	26
<b>Seven</b>	<b>Getting advice and help</b>	<b>29</b>
	<i>RTPI</i>	29
	<i>Conservation officers, libraries and museums</i>	29
	<i>Central government</i>	29

	<i>English Heritage, Historic Scotland, CADW, DoE(NI)</i>	30
	<i>Institute of Historic Building Conservation</i>	30
	<i>Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers</i>	30
	<i>English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF)/Historic Burghs Association of Scotland</i>	30
	<i>Learned societies</i>	31
	<i>Civic Trust, Scottish Civic Trust</i>	31
	<i>Advisory bodies</i>	31
	<i>Other associations</i>	31
	<i>Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England and the National Monuments Record</i>	32
	<i>Consultants</i>	32
	<i>Other organizations</i>	32
<b>Eight</b>	<b>Avoiding and resolving conflict</b>	<b>33</b>
	<i>Assembling a team</i>	33
	<i>Identifying conflict</i>	33
	<i>Gathering evidence</i>	33
	<i>Giving and receiving advice</i>	33
	<i>Facilitating communication</i>	33
	<i>Commissioning experts</i>	34
<b>Nine</b>	<b>Being proactive</b>	<b>35</b>
	<i>Internal training</i>	35
	<i>Engagement and empowerment</i>	35
	<i>Local lectures and seminars</i>	36
	<i>Commissioning studies</i>	36
<b>Ten</b>	<b>Co-ordination</b>	<b>39</b>
	<i>Internal and external relationships</i>	39
	<i>Interdepartmental relationships</i>	39
	<i>Public consultation on policy and promotion</i>	40
	<i>Application progress</i>	40
<b>Eleven</b>	<b>Recording and evaluating</b>	<b>41</b>
	<i>The importance of databases</i>	41
	<i>Types of data</i>	41
	<i>Quality Assurance</i>	42
<b>Twelve</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>43</b>
	<i>The legislation and policy advice</i>	43
	<i>Listed Building control</i>	43
	<i>Conservation Area designation</i>	43
	<i>Local Plan and UDP policies</i>	43
	<i>Enhancement and implementation</i>	44
	<i>Availability and preparation of documents</i>	44
	<b>Summary of key points</b>	<b>45</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>List of organizations</b>	<b>49</b>

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# Foreword

While some RTPI members specialize in work involving conservation of the historic environment, the majority of conservation work is carried out by non-specialist members as part of their day to day work. The Royal Town Planning Institute has produced this document as a general guide for all members who are involved in any way with the historic environment.

It would clearly be impossible to produce a single document that tells planners all they need to know about conservation of the historic environment, and that is not the objective of this guide. The document first briefly sets out the background to the development of the conservation movement, but the main aim has been to produce a document that highlights the major issues with which planners are likely to be involved in their day to day work. These issues do not relate simply to the processing of applications or preparation of planning policies. The guide also deals with matters such as when specialist advice might be needed, and opportunities to be proactive. It concludes with a summary of what should be included within a good practice strategy to enable a local authority to carry out its conservation responsibilities.

The legislation dealt with in this guide covers all parts of the United Kingdom. England and Wales have the same primary legislation, and separate legislation applies in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Where necessary, differences in government guidance and decision-making bodies are highlighted.

This good practice guide was produced by a steering group of the RTPI's Conservation and Design in the Historic Environment Panel, based on work commissioned from Conservation Architecture and Planning.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

- 1.1 Conservation has become a topic on which nearly everyone has a view. From the Rio summit to the village hall, it embraces many activities, touches on global, national and local issues, and crosses the bounds of professional disciplines, including planning, architecture, landscape, engineering, archaeology, urban design, history, ecology, sociology, physical sciences, economics and agriculture. Planners, whose role is so often at the core of any issue involving the use, development and management of land, buildings and resources, have a special contribution to make to the historic environment. This practical guide about conservation of the built environment is a contribution towards the wider national and global issues that face the planning profession.
- 1.2 Long before the advent of the National Lottery, heritage was broadly accepted as a ‘good cause’. Notwithstanding recurring questions within and without the profession about whether conservation has gone ‘too far’, there is a responsibility, mandated by Parliament, to assist the preservation of the historic environment in the public interest. This duty falls upon all planners, not just public sector conservation officers or others who exercise control over development on behalf of decision-making authorities.
- 1.3 However there is little commonly held understanding among planners and other professions of what conservation is, let alone how to go about it. Even in the nineteenth century, the founders of modern conservation warned that ‘restoration’ was the most complete destruction that could be suffered by an historic building, a destruction accompanied by a false description of the thing destroyed. In today’s terms, some of the worst loss of character occurs, and is sanctioned by having been granted permission, in the name of conservation. Expert advice ‘on tap’ is nearly always necessary. In recognition that planning is a co-operative as well as a cumulative activity, it is vitally important that sound conservation principles and best practice are included in every planner’s toolbox and used effectively.

### Conservation defined

- 1.4 Both ‘controllers’ (those responsible for assessing and advising decision makers on applications) and ‘proposers’ (applicants or their agents) should have a common understanding of what conservation is. A good definition is that given in the *BSI Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings*:

*Action to secure the survival or preservation for the future of buildings, cultural artefacts, natural resources, energy or any other thing of acknowledged value.*

### Why conserve?

- 1.5 Given that all practising planners must have at least a working knowledge of government advice relevant to their workload, they are likely to encounter PPG15 in England and guidance in other parts of the UK such as NPPG18 in Scotland. The first paragraph of PPG15 declares:

*The physical survivals of our past are to be valued for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an*

*irreplaceable record which contributes to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness.*

The greatest gift bestowed by something old is the effect of the character and beauty of its age on our experience, not merely intellectual, but sensory and emotional. Building and area conservation are popular because:

- There is no obvious reason to do away with valued things which can still be used.
- They speak eloquently of those who created and used them before, or of important people or events in our cultural memory.
- They possess the unique beauty or character of their time of creation and the effects of time upon them.
- Redevelopment is often seen as harmful.
- There are often sound economic and regenerative benefits.
- Conservation addresses the increasing interest in sustainable futures.

## Scope

- 1.6 This advice is intended for general application throughout the planning profession, not as another specialist conservation guide (of which there are already many good ones), or procedural manual, or specifier's sourcebook. There would be no point in duplicating or competing with the technical, topic and procedural guides published by English Heritage, Historic Scotland, CADW, learned societies, government departments, individual authors and many local authorities. This guide should be used in conjunction with the views of specialist conservation consultants, conservation officers, and allied disciplines whose different perspectives add to the understanding of a proposal.
- 1.7 It is interesting to note that in the private sector there are at present relatively few specialist conservation planners. The RTPI Conservation and Design in the Historic Environment Panel seeks to encourage greater interest in this field of practice. The aim of the guide is thus to advance awareness of current conservation theory and practice and the legislative and official framework within which they operate, citing wherever possible examples of good practice which are either 'generic' or carry possibilities for application beyond their original locations. Details of relevant legislation, guidance or sources of information are generally not recited in this concise guide, but cross-referenced wherever possible.

## Key points to note

- Members have a duty to assist the preservation of the historic environment.
- Members should be aware of and acknowledge the conservation dimension in their work.
- Members should know when and where to seek specialist conservation advice.

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# Chapter Two

## The conservation movement

### Origins, early philosophy and achievement

- 2.1 From the earliest, even prehistoric, times civilisations have conserved their past. Modern conservation, with its increasing focus on recording, codification, selection criteria and the use of science and technology, is generally considered to have its origins in the antiquarian and romantic thought of the eighteenth century, and its main impetus and formal foundation from about the mid-nineteenth century. John Ruskin attacked the sterile ‘restorations’ of ancient churches by influential zealots from the 1840s, declaring that it was ‘impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture’.
- 2.2 In 1877, the proposed works to Tewkesbury Abbey by G. G. Scott led the enraged William Morris to form the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Its Manifesto, written by Morris, aimed to establish the supremacy of ‘educated, artistic people’ over professionals in judging what was worth protecting and how best to go about protecting it. It pleaded with those who deal with buildings of ‘all times and styles’ to:

*put Protection in place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof . . . to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of a building as it stands; . . . to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created by bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying.*

- 2.3 By the late nineteenth century, the first conservation legislation, covering Ancient Monuments, had been enacted, the National Trust established and the systematic Survey of London begun. Government grant-aid for the preservation of ancient monuments started in 1931, and the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act provided for serving Building Preservation Orders on threatened historic buildings. In Scotland, the list of Scottish ‘vernacular architecture’ compiled by the Marquis of Bute in the 1930s acted as a catalyst for the postwar nationwide listing programme.

### Postwar conservation

- 2.4 The power under the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 to compile lists of buildings of architectural and historic interest was made by the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 into a duty. The demolition of many fine nineteenth-century buildings, including Euston Station and its Arch in 1963, was a watershed which led the young Victorian Society and others successfully to demand blanket control over alteration or demolition of listed buildings, but this was not conferred until 1968.
- 2.5 The rapid pace of postwar slum clearance, comprehensive replanning of areas and demolition of older buildings raised new concerns that much rich heritage would be replaced by dreary, inhuman schemes. Public opinion and pressure from the Civic Trust and others for protection of historic areas led to the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and the first Conservation Areas. Control over demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas followed with the 1974 Town and Country Amenities Act.

- 2.6 Certain alterations to single-family houses in Conservation Areas, such as roof extensions, have also been brought under control. In England and Wales the General Permitted Development Order 1995 has removed the need to seek the consent of the Secretary of State where authorities consider that certain development permitted under Article 4(2) of the Order should be brought under control. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, a direction is still required from the Minister that any class of permitted development shall not apply in any Conservation Area.
- 2.7 Ancient monuments and archaeological areas legislation was consolidated and updated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and parallel legislation, now administered by the Ancient Monuments Divisions of English Heritage, Historic Scotland, CADW and the DoE(NI) Environment and Heritage Services (EHS). Nevertheless, authorities have a planning duty to consider any potential effects of development proposals on areas of archaeological interest.
- 2.8 Legislation cited in this guide covers all parts of the UK. England and Wales have the same primary legislation, and separate legislation applies in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Where necessary, differences in government guidance and decision-making bodies are highlighted.
- 2.9 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Acts 1990 (England and Wales) and 1997 (Scotland) bring together previous legislation. They set out government's duty and procedures for identifying buildings of architectural and historic importance. They also set out the mandatory (with certain exceptions) application process, normally to the local planning authority in the first instance, for consent to carry out works affecting their character and the sanctions which may be invoked, including criminal prosecution, where unauthorized work has occurred. Well over half a million UK buildings have been listed by ministers responsible for planning, while local authority autonomy over Conservation Area designation and eventual control has arguably been decisive in enabling Conservation Areas to number about 10,000 today.

### **Sustainability**

The White Paper *A Better Quality of Life* committed the government to the concept of not sacrificing what future generations will value for the sake of short-term and often illusory gains. English Heritage has also published *Sustaining the Historic Environment*, in which the principles of sustainability and concepts of heritage values, participation and environmental capital are discussed.

- 2.10 Historic parks, gardens and battlefields have also been identified, graded and designated nationally. Although designation does not offer statutory protection, other than to any structures that may be listed or buildings within Conservation Areas, the effect of development proposals on the preservation of their character is a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 2.11 Legal decisions are sometimes apt abruptly to alter the interpretation or application of legislation. For example, the House of Lords decision in 1999 on the Shimizu case means

that Conservation Area consent is not required for partial demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area.

- 2.12 The role pioneered by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in bringing informed lay opinion to bear on historic buildings proposals has, in England and Wales, been confirmed in law. This role is also enjoyed by other statutory consultees: the Ancient Monuments Society, the Council for British Archaeology, the Georgian Group (covering the period 1700–1840), the Victorian Society (1840–1914) and the Twentieth Century Society. While it is not a statutory duty in Scotland and Northern Ireland, government advice is to consult the equivalent bodies where appropriate. Non-statutory consultees, including Conservation Area Advisory Committees, are also regularly involved.

### Current thinking

- 2.13 Conservation is not synonymous with restoration or preservation. Again, the *BSI Guide* helps to distinguish between them, and defines restoration as:

*alteration of a building, part of a building or artefact which has decayed, been lost or damaged or is thought to have been inappropriately repaired or altered in the past, the objective of which is to make it conform again to its design or to its appearance at a previous date*

and preservation as:

*the state of survival of a building or artefact, whether by historical accident or through a combination of protection and active conservation.*

- 2.14 The definition of ‘restoration’ helps explain why the practice was condemned by early conservation campaigners. It was then, and sometimes still is, too easy to draw up a ‘restoration’ scheme without any real evidence about design or appearance at a previous date. Later work of great quality, adding to the overall interest of the building, could be replaced with inferior invention, falsely described as having ‘restored the original’. Many medieval churches thus had their real histories and much important fabric destroyed in the name of ‘restoration’. Current thinking in the UK, while still indebted to the SPAB approach, is also informed by other national and international philosophical and practical guidance, some but not all of which is mirrored in legislation.

### Criteria for conservation schemes

- 2.15 English Heritage’s *Principles of Repair* and Historic Scotland’s *The Repair of Historic Buildings in Scotland* set out the broad criteria on which conservation schemes should be based, while stressing that there can be no standard specification for the repair of historic buildings and monuments. The criteria include:

The purpose of repair:	restraining the process of decay without damaging their character.
The need for repair:	the minimum intervention required to stabilize and conserve to ensure long-term survival.
Avoiding unnecessary damage:	unnecessary replacement diminishes authenticity.
Analysing historic development:	an understanding of the building is a necessary preliminary to its repair.
Analysing the causes of defects:	correct remedies must proceed from correct diagnosis.
Adopting proven techniques:	match existing materials wherever possible.

Truth to materials:	do not attempt to disguise repairs so that they appear old.
Removal of later alterations:	generally retain any work of quality or interest and record any inferior or harmful work removed.
Restoration of lost features:	reinstate only where sufficient evidence exists for accuracy and no loss of historic fabric occurs.
Safeguarding the future:	secure an appropriate use and provide for regular monitoring and maintenance.

## International conservation

- 2.16 As early as 1931 delegates to an international conference at Athens drafted a charter which aimed at establishing agreed principles of conservation to which nations could subscribe. With the Venice Charter of 1964 and the formation of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the basis of an internationally agreed approach to conservation was laid down. The role of ICOMOS has been to identify and win official status through UNESCO and national governments for World Heritage sites, the conservation of which is by definition of world importance. Sites in England include Stonehenge, the Palace of Westminster area, Georgian Bath and Ironbridge Gorge. Scottish examples are Edinburgh Old and New Towns. In Wales, Harlech, Beaumaris, Conwy and Carmarthen Castles are designated, and Northern Ireland has the Giant's Causeway. The Venice Charter was followed in 1979 by the Burra Charter (revised 1988) adopted by ICOMOS Australia, setting out ten principles of conservation, the foremost of which (Article 2) is:

*The aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of place and must include provision for its security, its maintenance and its future.*

- 2.17 James Semple Kerr's *The Conservation Plan* 1982 (4th edition 1996) offers a general methodology for identifying and grading places of cultural significance, thus addressing the issue of how to define 'acknowledged value'. Having done so, the plan sets out key steps from development to implementation of a Conservation Policy for a particular place. Kerr's plan also stresses that:

*Conservation and development are not mutually exclusive objectives; they should, and can be part of a single planning process. . . . Developments do not take place in a vacuum. . . . This seemingly obvious fact has to be understood and accepted before decisions on the relationship of conservation and development can be made.*

- 2.18 This is known as 'context' in conservation or new development.

### Key points to note:

- Members should have a working knowledge of current conservation law, definitions, guidance and sources of information.
- Members should have a general awareness of current conservation thinking, including sustainable development.

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# Chapter Three

## Tools of the trade

### **The strategy**

- 3.1 A strategic approach to the management of the historic environment is recommended. This section identifies and brings together the tools available to develop an effective strategy to deal with the process of managing the historic environment. The strategy should set the overall direction and purpose of choices, and help develop policies.

### **Values**

#### *Philosophy*

- 3.2 Practical application of conservation philosophy can be a powerful weapon in framing policies or sustaining arguments in individual cases, ranging from destruction of fabric at one end of the scale to over-restoration at the other. A wide range of buildings and sites have been awarded a level of protection, including scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, historic parks and gardens, battlefields and World Heritage sites.

#### *Education*

- 3.3 Conservation education is developing rapidly in depth and range of coverage, and there is an increasing number of full-time, part-time and short courses, at least one of which should suit any planner's interests and career path. The IHBC (Institute of Historic Building Conservation) and COTAC (Conference on Training in Architectural Conservation) are initial points of contact for information on the range and content of courses and where to find them. There are also many less formal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses throughout the country. It has long been regarded as far more effective to educate building owners and their advisers in good conservation practice than to attempt to police bad practice. Enlightened self-interest can be a persuasive argument in this form of education: conserving may be the best way to maximize market value.

#### *Promotion*

- 3.4 Activities such as local lectures, press reports or articles, exhibitions, design leaflets, award schemes, demonstration schemes and other measures designed to promote conservation awareness or achievement are already part of a conservation specialist's repertoire, and should form a regular part of public and private sector planning programmes. Publicity given to good completed projects can often pay dividends in attracting further interest and funding for others.

#### *Politics*

- 3.5 The local and national political arenas are fertile grounds for promoting principles, policies and practical projects in conservation. Support for conservation is an acknowledged vote-winner, and politicians should be aware that around 75% of all Listed and Conservation Area buildings are domestic, inhabited by voters. Planners who report to,

### **Example**

A resident, concerned that a company was canvassing his Conservation Area, offering incentives to owners who would agree to having their red brick houses spray-coated with the company's product, sent a copy of their literature to the local authority. The Conservation Officer rushed out a flyer to all households, warning them of the harmful effect on both character and property value. No offers were taken up and an Article 4 Direction was soon made.

### **Example**

The Thurrock, Essex, case in which a magistrate found a Member of Parliament guilty of twenty-nine Listed Building offences, imposing fines and costs against the defendants. In the parallel enforcement action, the owners were compelled to undo part of the work they had carried out and implement further works in mitigation of certain harmful effects which could not be undone. Although the case was time-consuming for the officers involved, the wide publicity given to it has arguably deterred other potential offenders and increased awareness among Listed Building owners and their advisers of the requirement for prior consent.

or have contact with, elected decision-makers are in a key position to advise them on both their statutory duties and the constituency benefits that an enlightened conservation programme can bring. At the national level, conservation planners have taken the lead in pressing for an end to VAT on historic building repairs, opposing deregulation of Grade II interiors, promoting streamlining of repairs and urgent works procedures and other issues. The setting up of the Heritage Lottery Fund and allocation of National Lottery income to it was, of course, a political decision.

## **Mechanisms**

### *Practical and technical*

- 3.6 Planning officers and planning consultants may be the first point of contact for professionals and laypersons alike seeking practical solutions or technical advice. Routine or generic advice can sometimes be derived from *Principles of Repair* (English Heritage), the BSI *Guide*, PPG15 Appendix C, Welsh Office Circulars 61/96 and 1/98, the Historic Scotland *Memorandum of Guidance* and NPPG18, and the Northern Ireland Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6, all of which stress the importance of keeping intervention to the minimum possible level, the need for appropriate skill in specifying or executing work, regular inspection, systematic and prioritized care and other factors. Details can be found in the bibliography.

- 3.7 Planners should be cautious in recommending any technique, source of advice, contractor or supplier without detailed knowledge of the project in question and all relevant circumstances. In such cases a suitable disclaimer against legal liability and, wherever possible, multiple references should be provided.

Recurring requests could be met with a prepared information sheet, local guide or referral to sources of further information. Authorities often produce guides on the same topic, and when one is relevant to your problem or area, it might be more effective to refer to it than to reinvent the wheel.

#### *Local Lists*

- 3.8 The compilation of a 'Local List' of buildings which are considered important and representative of the local scene and history of an area can provide additional information on the historic environment and can help in formulating local plan policies. Such a list can be helpful in identifying buildings which might merit spot-listing.

#### *Article 4 Directions*

- 3.9 The withdrawal of permitted development rights using either Article 4(1) or Article 4(2) should only be done where there is the potential for damage to an area through the continued erosion of character which, if it continued, would result in a loss of the character and valued amenity. Equally there may be a situation where the investment in the fabric of the buildings needs to be protected by the serving of an Article 4 Direction.

#### *Conservation Area appraisal*

- 3.10 The systematic analysis and recording of Conservation Areas is necessary to identify the valued components which contribute to their character, and enable policies for their protection and enhancement to be developed.

#### *Public Realm Audits, Landscape Assessments and Village Design Statements*

- 3.11 This is another set of tools designed to help establish a sound understanding of the content and quality of an area. The assistance of local residents can often be secured to assist in the preparation of the information, giving a sense of ownership.

#### *Supplementary Planning Guidance*

- 3.12 To supplement and support the policies in the Local Plan a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents can provide invaluable support and definition to the Local Plan.

### *Buildings at Risk and Condition Surveys*

- 3.13 A regular survey of the historic building stock using the English Heritage identification system will enable buildings which are at risk to be identified and monitored. The survey should be undertaken on a regular basis of between three and five years. Identifying buildings at risk and keeping a record can be a useful way of prioritizing resources. If repeated at regular intervals, a Listed Buildings at Risk survey also provides a good indicator of the ongoing condition of the historic fabric within the district.

### *Enforcement*

- 3.14 Listed Building and Conservation Area enforcement is one of the most effective tools in tackling unauthorized work and, when successful, preventing other infringements from being attempted. Criminal prosecution of an offence and enforcement action may both be invoked, should always be supported by robust evidence, and should always adhere strictly to the necessary legal procedures to avoid the possibility of failure on a technicality. Such measures are however a last resort. Where there is advance knowledge of possible infringement, for example through an inquiry, report, personal observation or Building Control Notice, every effort should be made to verify the alleged breach and if necessary get the work stopped.

### *Urgent Works and Repairs Notices*

- 3.15 Conservative repair (i.e. minimum intervention using traditional, proven, reversible techniques) and regular maintenance are the key to the long-term survival of historic buildings and areas. Effective use of authorities' powers of control and enforcement, while essential, will not of itself prevent disuse or neglect. Wherever possible, anticipate the need for action and ensure that the authority's standing orders and procedures are able to facilitate any emergency action. Monitoring the condition of buildings through surveys should be undertaken, and the timely use of Urgent Works and Repairs Notices invoked to prevent more serious crises occurring.

#### **Example**

A proposed change to office use by a regional health authority of a Grade I building included steel strengthening and false floors, with the loss of all original fireplaces, panelling, flooring and skirting of the eighteenth-century principal rooms. The Conservation Officer's resistance caused the health authority to threaten abandonment on grounds of cost, leaving the building empty and derelict. An offer of part funding by the local planning authority, English Heritage and the Heritage of London Trust unlocked further health authority funds and transformed the scheme into one which was conservation-led. The completed work was hailed as exemplary, and the health authority and local planning authority jointly run annual open day guided tours.

*Funding*

- 3.16 Financial assistance and incentives are among the most powerful tools that can be used to achieve successful conservation schemes. Opportunities may be available in local, regional, national and international categories, and can be based on heritage, tourism, regeneration, transport, arts, sport, education and other fields. The right approach to funding will depend upon a thorough understanding of the project and the eligibility criteria that a funding body would apply. Considerable expertise in this role is advisable. Even one-off grants should not be dismissed. However, individual Grade II buildings which do not fall within any other priority funding category are unlikely to receive assistance. Conservation can promote and enable significant contributions to be made in area regeneration projects. Specific conservation funding packages are available from the English Heritage 'Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme' (HERS) and the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Townscape Heritage Initiative'.

**Key points to note:**

- Members should develop skills or seek specialist advice in specifying and using sanctions, incentives and other techniques for conservation.
- Advice aimed at raising owners' awareness of policy and best practice is very cost-effective in achieving conservation and preventing neglect or harmful work.



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# Chapter Four

## Defining the historic environment

### Statutory duties

- 4.1 The statutory duties of authorities and the responsibilities of applicants with respect to conservation matters are governed by the relevant Acts. Planning Policy Guidance relevant to conservation across the UK sets out what is required when preparing Local Plans and handling or making applications, and the basic criteria against which proposed development should be judged.

Local authorities are required to review their areas from time to time to ensure that any further areas of special character are identified and designated. Local Plans should therefore state a proactive strategy of regular review of, and consultation on, existing and potential areas, and the local criteria or requirements for considering an area of special character sufficient to warrant designation.

- 4.2 With the advice of the heritage agencies, central government is responsible for scheduling Ancient Monuments, listing historic buildings and registering historic parks, gardens and battlefield sites. Local authorities may ask for any of these functions to be undertaken in specific cases, but their major role is the designation of Conservation Areas. There is no standard definition of a Conservation Area. Authorities are obliged to determine which parts of their area are ‘special’, having regard to the criteria outlined in the relevant Planning Policy Guidance and, where they are met, the area shall be designated. The authority then has to formulate plans to preserve or enhance the area’s character. That can be achieved partly through the development control system, partly by strategic policy making and partly by direct intervention.

### Perception

- 4.3 In identifying special aspects of an area, planners should be guided by paragraph 4.4 of PPG15. When making subjective judgements, they will need an elementary knowledge of the history of an area as a paramount requirement. Both general and specialized planning skills need to be honed to appreciate the historic elements that mould the special character of an area.

### Appraisals

- 4.4 Ideally, the special character of an area should be defined before a Conservation Area is designated. However, there are many existing designations where such definition is

Conservation Areas vary greatly, but certain aspects will almost always form the basis for a coherent assessment: the topography – for example, thoroughfares and property boundaries – and its historical development; the prevalent building materials; the character and hierarchy of spaces; the quality and relationship of buildings in the area, and also of trees and other green features. The assessment should always note those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area.

only now being considered. The form of the appraisal should reflect the use to be made of it: for example policy, development control or fund-raising. The appraisal should be as detailed as resources permit. Where this means a very bulky document, publication of an abbreviated version should be considered in order to engage public interest.

- 4.5 What should be included within a Conservation Area? The prime question cannot always be answered quickly or straightforwardly. While it is often possible to get the ‘feel’ of an area from looking at its buildings and layout, there may be much else that is missed without proper appraisal, and could therefore be lost. Similarly, opportunities for rescue or enhancement may be lost unless they are correctly identified and targeted. The process and speed of designation should respond to the circumstances. Proper programming, consultation, evidence and local support should be the rule, but urgent threats or other factors may also demand urgent action, to be followed up by an in-depth appraisal as soon as possible.
- 4.6 The English Heritage guidance *Conservation Area Appraisals* stresses that there is no standard definition of character, and that each area has to be defined according to individual and often idiosyncratic criteria. English Heritage’s *Conservation Area Practice* includes a ‘character checklist’, summarized as:
- origin and topographical development
  - archaeological development and potential

### **Example**

The threatened pre-emptive demolition of a fine nineteenth-century mansion led to the designation of an area around it being begun and concluded on a single Friday. The mechanism for serving a court injunction preventing demolition was also put in place in case demolition was attempted over the weekend. Eventually, high-quality refurbishment and complementary new build were achieved by agreement.

- intrinsic interest of buildings
- character of spaces, townscape quality
- distinctive traditional building materials
- green spaces, planting
- uses of buildings
- relationship of buildings to landscape/countryside
- negative elements, opportunities for change
- neutral elements.

- 4.7 Positive features which make an area special should be definable and defensible against any challenge. It is also important that these features are capable of preservation and/or enhancement, while allowing appropriate, managed change over time.

### Example

With over fifty Conservation Areas, Westminster City Council has found it expedient to produce a single glossy leaflet for each. A typical leaflet includes:

- a map of the area at a readable scale
- city-wide location map
- date of designation
- historical background
- Listed Buildings
- Key features and land uses
- adjacent Conservation Areas
- strategic views
- areas of archaeological priority
- Article 4/Regulation 7 directions
- planning briefs and design guides
- contact information.

The leaflets are augmented by generic topic pamphlets including a *Property Owners' Conservation Guide*, *Advert Guidelines*, *Shopfronts*, *Buildings at Risk*, *Roof Extensions*, *Tables and Chairs on the Highway*, *Plant and Air Conditioning* and other matters.

## Gathering evidence

- 4.8 Appraisal material must be collated and supported by documentary evidence. It requires heightened awareness of visual, historical, geographical, morphological, social and other qualities of cultural significance. Clarity and completeness are necessary for an authoritative appraisal. The buildings and other elements that constitute an historic environment have individual characteristics, and interact over the area under consideration. Local knowledge may be valuable when gathering evidence, although input from other professionals and disciplines can provide greater objectivity and fresh insights in appraisals.
- 4.9 Deciding what should be in the designation report is crucial. If, for example, there is a large amount of historical evidence, selection may be necessary. It is vitally important to

realize that, while there must be seen to be a direct relationship between past and present character, it is the latter that will be given greatest weight in deciding any contentious matter. The character may derive, for example, from manifestations of social history that have shaped the area. Settlement patterns and thoroughfares may have been obscured by recent developments. Map sequences may reveal historic patterns and strongly influence enhancement proposals and development control policies. It is therefore of the greatest importance that expertise is concentrated on grasping and portraying the character of the area, not just describing it.

### **Example**

Vale Royal Borough Council has developed common appraisal criteria for all its conservation areas. Enlarging on English Heritage guidance, the criteria include a procedural framework, prioritized programme, appraisal process and future review.

## **Benefits**

- 4.10 The definition of character needs to be a positive force in any Conservation Area statement. Designation appraisals or policies that are seen as unduly restrictive are more vulnerable to attack and are therefore more likely to fail in their objectives. The benefits of preserving the elements that make up the special character need to be understood clearly. Citing examples where character has been eroded through lack of control in the past, or where current threats exist, can also convince sceptics. Poor quality sites can be included where they are integral with the area.

Cotswold District Council's 144 conservation areas will take over twenty years to appraise properly at the current rate. They have some 5,000 listed buildings to look after. As part of their best value review process they are considering how to speed up appraisals without reducing the quality of their finished statements, by allocating both in-house and specialist consultant resources.

## **Resources**

- 4.11 English Heritage's *Conservation Area Appraisals* advocates a rigorous approach and sets a national standard, thus tending to minimize subjectivity and achieve greater

consistency. In authorities with many Conservation Areas, dedicated resources will be necessary to implement a programme of such appraisals if they are to avoid being unduly protracted. While some appraisal details might be tackled in a single line, others may need many pages. Authorities' conservation resources tend to be allocated to essential day-to-day tasks such as proposed works to historic buildings, delaying a systematic review of Conservation Areas. Programmes should also reflect local priorities: which areas are under most pressure, or have the greatest need. If the gathering of appraisal data must take place over a period of time as the workload permits, extracting details into an 'appraisal file' for future collation and editing can use resources more effectively.

**Example**

A consultant's appraisal of Oldham — one of the first carried out to English Heritage guidelines — had an imposed fifteen-day turnaround, and comprised a densely printed forty-five-page report with a twelve-map sequence and twenty-four pages of illustrations with extended captions.

- 4.12 When an appraisal or programme is being commissioned from a specialist conservation consultant, a proper brief is a vitally important in clarifying — for both client and consultant — what is actually required. Although the English Heritage guidelines provide the basic approach for character appraisals, the extent and depth of content should relate directly to the nature of the area: for example its size, complexity and importance. Producing cost-limited basic documents will normally be better than leaving areas unappraised indefinitely, and they can always be added to later.
- 4.13 Where appraisals have not already been undertaken, and often even where they have, applicants may still need to commission detailed studies as part of the required justification of their proposals, or as part of a body of evidence in appeals. In such cases there could be a conflict of expert opinion as to the character of the area, or how to approach its conservation. Good information produced through these processes can however be

**Example**

The sensitivity of development proposals in Fulham, involving considerable changes to the character of a Conservation Area, required that the proposer commission an independent consultant to prepare a full appraisal and advise on the design criteria for a form and appearance which could be supported as enhancing the character of the area, despite council acknowledgement of the need for development.

recycled (with the author's consent) into full appraisals, potentially saving much time and money.

### **National, regional and local factors**

- 4.14 The historic environment comprises elements of varying nature and importance considered against national, regional and local criteria. National considerations are difficult to assess because they require wider knowledge and research, and they may, therefore, be most open to challenge. Regional characteristics are easier to set in context with locally available information, while local importance should be based on physical conditions and distinctiveness. It follows that local knowledge is important and that, where reference to the national context is relevant, expert advice may be necessary.

#### **Example**

An application to replace several inter-war suburban private estate houses of good quality with blocks of flats was opposed by surrounding residents, who asked the local council to designate a Conservation Area urgently. The Conservation Officer's assessment supported designation, and the application was refused. On appeal, the appellants argued that the character of the area was not in fact 'special', but the designation was upheld and the appeal dismissed. Many other authorities followed suit in reviewing their inter-war estates.

### **Participation**

- 4.15 The participation of the public, as distinct from reliance solely on expert opinion in defining the historic environment, is vital. The public has been consulted on the listing of some modern buildings. It has always been open to any member of the public to propose buildings for listing or, for that matter, de-listing. In many cases, local communities have initiated proposals for Conservation Areas, often because they perceive an imminent threat. It is important that the definition of the historic environment has popular support, as well as academic rigour, and participation should therefore be encouraged.

### **Review**

- 4.16 Perceptions of what is historic have moved on since the days of the conservation movement's pioneers, and are still evolving. One example is the contribution which physical, social and economic planning has made to the nation. The work of early planners is more often acknowledged than later, notably postwar, work. This in turn reconfirms the need for periodic review of listing and designation as required under the Act. Review is necessary to ensure that identification and management of the historic environment continues to have a positive, profound effect on people's lives.

### **Key points to note:**

Members should:

- Take account of changing perceptions of cultural or historic importance.
- Define character and appearance rigorously and state the method used.
- Identify the benefits to the public arising from conservation.
- Allocate sufficient resources to achieve the required tasks.
- Stress local identity as a positive element of character.
- Encourage maximum participation.
- Programme and undertake regular reviews of areas of special character and consider designation as Conservation Areas.



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# Chapter Five

## Role of the development plan

### The process

- 5.1 Most of this section will apply to local and unitary development plans as appropriate across the UK. All Local Plans are required to include policies for ‘the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land’ and for ‘the improvement of the physical environment’.

### Co-ordinating land use and conservation policy

- 5.2 Local Plans are the main vehicle for ensuring that conservation policies are co-ordinated and integrated with other planning policies affecting the historic environment. Imaginative policies can encourage the satisfactory reuse of neglected historic buildings, regenerate run-down historic areas and tackle land use or environmental factors which may be discouraging conservation programmes, such as traffic, density or housing policies.
- 5.3 Government advice also stresses that Local Plans should set out authorities’ criteria for designating and reviewing Conservation Areas, as well as their policies for preservation or enhancement of the historic environment, and make clear to the public how the detailed assessment process operates and the weight which will be given to the plans in decisions on applications. The foremost objective of conservation policies and reasoned justification within Local Plans should be to interpret national policy in a manner which reflects the particular local context. Policies should not therefore merely reiterate government advice but use it, with other advice and data, to help frame distinctive and relevant policies designed to address specific local issues.
- 5.4 The Local Plan process is both collaborative and consultative. As such there should be no artificial barriers between those who develop policy and those who implement it. In the ‘plan led’ regime within which (with the current exception of Northern Ireland) we operate, it is important that policies are as precise, detailed and authoritative as possible. If not, they will ultimately fail to achieve their stated purpose, or fail to stand up under

#### Example

Islington’s inclusion of design guidelines for all its Conservation Areas in its draft Unitary Development Plan was ruled out as inappropriate on account of their detailed nature after a judicial review. The council has now published them as a single SPG document, with a common introduction explaining the law, the aims of the guidance, when permission is required, and where Article 4 directions apply, together with notes on maintenance and caring for trees. The council has also prepared explanatory leaflets for each area.

scrutiny such as at a public inquiry. Transparency of process within central, regional and local seats of power, is vital to good conservation planning. (Political and administrative structures in Northern Ireland differ, as central government is responsible for all key functions and district councils act as statutory consultees. Non-statutory policy and guidance can carry relatively greater weight in decision making there.)

- 5.5 When assessing applications, a development control planner who is not expert in conservation and who has no expert help available within the authority should aim to facilitate joint understanding of the issues, explaining the reasons for the relevant policies in the development plan, and explaining their relevance to the application.

### **Contributing to other programmes**

- 5.6 The Local Plan process and format need to recognize the interdependence between programmes such as town centre regeneration, housing, tourism, leisure and transport, and conservation. They need to acknowledge that up-to-date research shows that conservation-led strategies can bring benefits equal to, or greater than, those of redevelopment.

### **Essential and desirable inputs**

- 5.7 As with any Local Plan policy, those dealing with conservation must be precise, well aimed and founded on current best practice to be effective. Essential inputs include:

- how national policy and strategic guidance are applied locally
- co-ordination with other strategic policies in the plan
- how and when the authority will carry out its statutory duties, such as review, designation, preservation and enhancement
- how and when the authority will invoke its powers, such as enforcement, Article 4 and repairs
- what information applicants will be expected to provide
- development control policies which address the effect of proposals on historic buildings or areas, such as change of use, alterations and extensions, and use of materials
- design considerations for new works in historic settings
- policies for archaeology
- access for people with disabilities
- the role and programme of Supplementary Planning Guidance
- local factors of particular importance.

- 5.8 Desirable inputs include:

- criteria for acceptable adaptive reuse
- reinstatement of missing features
- co-ordination with economic, environmental, tourism, transport, urban design, housing and other policies
- co-ordination with policies on townscape and the public domain
- flexibility in application of standards which might otherwise harm preservation or character
- policies in relation to pressure for change
- security considerations
- works by statutory undertakers
- floodlighting
- signs, hoardings, adverts.

## Design quality

- 5.9 Conservation involves more than preservation of the past. New development is inevitable, and this should not detract from the established values of the historic environment. High-quality design is a crucial factor in promoting sustainable development, improving the quality of the existing environment, attracting business and investment, and reinforcing local distinctiveness, civic pride and sense of place. This is recognized in PPG1 (revised February 1997) which defines urban design as:

*the relationship between the buildings and the streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces which make up the public domain; the nature and quality of the public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; and the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established; in short, the complex relationships between all the elements of built and unbuilt space.*

- 5.10 This advice applies everywhere in England and Wales, not just in Conservation Areas. In Scotland NPPG18, as with the rest of the NPPG series, gives a concise outline of planning policy guidance but does not contain more general technical advice (there is a separate series of Planning Advice Notes (PANs) for this). NPPG18 refers to the importance of design guides in relation to the conservation role, while the general principle of design is dealt with in NPPG1. The planning system and useful advice on conservation and design quality are contained in PAN52 *Planning in Small Towns*. With the coming of age of urban design, the objectives of conservation and good urban design are often likely to coincide. The principles and techniques of both are engendered and should be co-ordinated in Local Plans.

## Engaging the public

- 5.11 The transparency of process referred to above is particularly important where the public are involved in developing or responding to conservation-related policies or actual proposals. The clearer the policies, procedures and decision-making criteria, the more likely it is that people will engage in creative dialogue, seek assistance, report infringements, care for their own property, avoid NIMBY reactions and support soundly-based proposals. Planners should always be prepared to use whichever consultation and participation techniques are appropriate to the particular issue.

### Example

Wandsworth Council was one of the first to acknowledge and designate cottage estates as Conservation Areas. Later, when their character began to be threatened by new owner occupiers' 'improvements', it was at first feared that there would be much hostility to Article 4 Direction controls. However, surveys showed that the proposed controls were supported by new owners and tenants alike.

**Key points to note:**

- Members should interpret national policies in a local context.
- Members should co-ordinate land use and conservation policies.
- Members should not allow personal taste to affect judgement.
- Members should ensure that relevant planning processes are easily accessible to and understood by all.
- Members should promote effective collaboration and consultation.
- Members should review perceptions of what is worth conserving.
- Members should acknowledge the contribution of conservation to regeneration and other programmes such as sustainability.
- Well aimed, comprehensive local plan policies are essential.
- Members should develop and apply a methodology for judging quality in historic environments.
- Members should value public enthusiasm for conservation.

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# Chapter Six

## Applicant and decision-maker

### Content of applications: how to determine

- 6.1 Authorities' requirements vary widely and their guidance can be inadequate. A clear statement of the level of detail and the justification to be provided with applications should be available. In practice, however, there will be room for some discretion over the details necessary for minor works compared with those for major alterations. Where applications lack adequate information, they should not be registered. English Heritage's leaflet *Development in the Historic Environment* explains the expectations of all the parties in the application process.
- 6.2 Altogether, a meaningful dialogue and faster process are more likely to occur where:
- At least one meeting between the applicant (or their agent), the planning officer and other relevant staff, has taken place beforehand, preferably on site, so that the nature of the project can be explained and understood in its context, the building or locality itself.
  - Drawings are of a sequence, form and graphic quality that clearly explain what is intended, showing relevant existing work and all proposed changes, at an appropriate scale. It is no use imposing a blanket requirement that all drawings be at 1:50 if the building will not fit on even the largest drawing sheet. There can, however, be sense in requiring a precise moulding detail to be drawn at application stage, even if the proposal involves exact reproduction of an existing one, where it is important that the record is made before the original is lost.
  - A written statement, establishing an understanding of the building or area and its historic features, the reasons for the proposals, their details and the effects on the features or character, forms part of the application documents. Annotated photographs can be particularly useful here.
  - Other relevant supporting information is provided including, where necessary, an economic evaluation and the benefits to the public that would accrue from the development.
- 6.3 The number of copies of an application required should be seen to be necessary. Where planning and Listed Building applications are both being submitted, authorities should consider whether their procedures can be streamlined to allow one set, not two, to be circulated for both. Authorities should take less time to process applications where appropriate staff confirm the technical competence and completeness of applications before registration, seeking further details where necessary before the clock starts. Where applicants have taken the appropriate steps and included all the relevant details, they will expect efficient registration and processing by the local authority. If sufficient detail is not contained within the application, deemed refusal will be more effective than attempting a conditional consent.

### Post-application steps

- 6.4 In parallel with registration and forwarding to any statutory consultees, it is essential to allocate the most appropriate officer to the case if the planning system is to achieve the quality, speed and efficiency expected by the government and the public. Calling

**Example**

The Suffolk local planning authorities' joint guidance stipulates that applications must include:

- a statement explaining why the work proposed is desirable or necessary
- full information to enable the council to assess the impact of the work.

It recommends that applicants seek advice from conservation specialists and invites pre-application discussion. It then explains when Listed Building and Conservation Area consents are required, which forms must be used, how many copies of forms and drawings are to be submitted (three) and, in detail, what the drawings should show. It stresses the importance of stating the precise materials, colours and finishes and relevant specifications. It then states the meaning of Certificates A–D, and warns that unauthorized or premature work is a criminal offence, that decisions are normally made within eight weeks, and that planning permission may also be required.

meetings as early as possible with other officers who are likely to have an input to the committee report will help to identify issues requiring further details. This will ensure that the application can be dealt with speedily, and that the decision makers have all the relevant and necessary information.

## Consultations and referrals

- 6.5 Consultations generally follow a prescribed form and procedure. In England, for example, statutory and certain other consultees are listed in Annex A of PPG15. Referrals, notifications and reserve powers may differ in each case, and between London and elsewhere. English Heritage, or ultimately the Secretary of State, has the power to direct refusal of any application for Listed Building consent in Greater London and Grade I and II\* applications elsewhere in England, and must be notified of some Conservation Area applications. In Scotland the Scottish Ministers have to be notified. In Wales referrals to CADW are required for all applications for consent other than interiors to Listed Buildings, and for all HBCW grant-aided cases. Local planning authorities' own applications for Listed Building consent must be made to the Secretary of State for the Environment or the appropriate Minister in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Ministers must be notified in certain cases and may decide to call in the application. Press notices, neighbour, local amenity and Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) consultations (mainly in England) are generally undertaken as standard procedure.
- 6.6 The government recommends the establishment of CAACs, which can be a particularly valuable source of informed, independent opinion. They should advise on policy and strategy, as well as comment on individual applications. Members should include representatives of the main professional institutions, and lay people with detailed local knowledge and comprehension of the local and national policies on which judgements should be based. Where large numbers of applications are likely, each Conservation Area could have its own CAAC. Some authorities stipulate that applications will not be

**Example**

A Conservation Officer dealing with a listed Modern Movement house advised a surveyor preparing a schedule of works that some decayed special sections of what was clearly the designer's double glazing system should be replaced by new sections carefully scarfed in to match, rather than the whole window being replaced by standard modern sections. The surveyor couldn't understand why such trouble should be taken, as 'the house isn't even Georgian'. The explanations that both law and good practice applied to all Listed Buildings regardless of age, and that whether either of them actually liked the building in question was irrelevant, quickly secured the agreement to repair.

referred to a decision-making committee until a report has been received from the CAAC. Proper funding for CAAC expenses and officer support is essential if they are to contribute effectively.

- 6.7 Authorities' Standing Orders on how applications are dealt with at committee vary widely. While all committee meetings are held in public, many do not allow verbal representations from members of the public. Others have elaborate procedures for presentations by the applicant or agent, and objectors, followed by members' questions. It is, of course, important that any such procedure is seen to be fair to all parties and is made clear before the meeting.

**Key points to note:**

- Application guidance should make clear what information is required, relative to size and complexity.
- Pre-application contact between applicant and authority should include a site inspection wherever possible.
- Consultants should be fully conversant with the site and relevant conservation criteria.
- The need for all inputs and principal issues should be identified and delivery targets set before the case is allocated.
- Expert conservation advice should be cited and carry appropriate authority.
- Consultations should include mechanisms for dialogue, feedback and further information before decision.
- Conservation Area Advisory Committees should be properly funded and supported.



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# Chapter Seven

## Getting advice and help

- 7.1 While it is only reasonable to expect every competent town planner to have a sound knowledge of conservation principles, no single individual or team is likely to have all the answers to every problem at their fingertips. Few professionals work in a vacuum, and from time to time most need to seek expert and learned advice. This is certainly true in the case of conservation. The key point here is to know when and from whom to seek advice.

### RTPI

- 7.2 The RTPI and its members have long been a source of advice on a broad range of planning matters. This guide, and the RTPI's *The Character of Conservation Areas*, are intended to offer sound advice to planners on the principles of good practice in conservation. The Institute's Planning Aid Service maintains a register of volunteer planners, a few of whom are conservation specialists, who are prepared to give their time to local groups or individuals who cannot afford to employ consultants.

### Conservation officers, libraries and museums

- 7.3 Local authority conservation teams will usually be the focus for a considerable amount of information about individual buildings and areas, and a prime source of advice on many technical and procedural matters. However, it is frequently necessary to procure additional information from a range of other sources. For example local studies libraries, museums, archives and similar organizations will often hold valuable information about buildings or settlements in their area. Local groups such as historical societies and local experts may also hold information of key importance and be able to offer invaluable advice.

### Central government

- 7.4 In England and Wales, advice from central government on conservation matters, as with other aspects of the planning process, is provided through Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). PPG15 and PPG16 give advice on *Planning and the Historic Environment* and *Archaeology and Planning* respectively. The advice provided in PPG15, in particular, is extensive and clearly written, covering the full range of conservation issues in the development process, from the listing of buildings through to transport and traffic management. PPG15 and parallel documents focus strongly on procedural matters, but advice on alterations to listed buildings is included in Appendix C. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions deals with Local Plan review and advice, 'called-in' applications and appeals, and can be contacted directly about these matters. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport deals with policy and procedure for identifying and conserving the historic environment, including listing, with advice from English Heritage and parallel bodies elsewhere. In Northern Ireland all such matters are dealt with by the DoE(NI). The DETR also provides advice on traffic in historic areas through its series of Traffic Advisory Leaflets.
- 7.5 Although the nature of the guidance in England and Scotland is broadly similar, Scottish Government guidance is contained within the more concise series of NPPGs. These

constitute material considerations and form a framework for government determinations on planning appeals and other procedures. Conservation and archaeology are the subject of NPPG18 *Planning and the Historic Environment* and NPPG5 *Archaeology and Planning*. The separate Planning Advice Note (PAN) series provides technical advice on procedures and good practice which do not constitute material considerations. Relevant advice includes PAN42 *Archaeology: The Planning Process and Scheduled Monument Procedures*. There is no PAN on conservation, although there is longstanding guidance issued by Historic Scotland in its *Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*. The Scottish Executive Development Department is responsible for the planning regime, while Historic Scotland is an executive agency attached to the Scottish Executive Education Department.

## **English Heritage, Historic Scotland, CADW, DoE(NI)**

- 7.6 The general roles of the national conservation agencies are to advise government and others, promote best practice, look after properties in care, share determination of certain applications, and allocate funding. They are also often the starting point for seeking expert advice on a wide range of conservation matters. Advice from English Heritage and its counterparts is generally given from a national perspective. Specialist staff within these bodies include archaeologists, architects, historians, civil engineers and planners. Much of the advice in England is delivered through regionally-based teams, and enquiries should normally be directed to these in the first instance.
- 7.7 An extensive range of excellent advisory publications is also available from the national agencies. English Heritage, for example, has produced material on subjects as diverse as access for disabled people to historic buildings and the pointing of brickwork. In Scotland, Technical Advice Notes (TANs) offer similar guidance. (Some of the publications available from the national conservation agencies are referred to in the Bibliography.)

## **Institute of Historic Building Conservation**

- 7.8 Many public sector Conservation Officers, and an increasing number of private sector and academic specialists, are members of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). The IHBC is a potential source of helpful advice on a wide range of conservation matters. A regular quarterly journal, *Context*, is an authoritative source of valuable information, and other helpful documents have been produced such as Kindred's *Study of Listed Building Repairs Notices*.

## **Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers**

- 7.9 The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) is made up from local authority archaeologists in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their primary role is to maintain Sites and Monuments Records and ensure that appropriate advice is given on the archaeological implications of development. The Association has published advice for local authorities and applicants on the analysis and recording of historic buildings affected by development proposals. A similar organization exists in Scotland.

## **English Historic Towns Forum (EHTF)/Historic Burghs Association of Scotland**

- 7.10 These bodies exist to encourage the sharing of information and experience on issues of common concern in connection with the management of historic towns. Among other

objectives they organize conferences, seminars, and workshops on a range of topics aimed at generalist planners as well as conservation specialists. The EHTF regularly publishes practical advice and guidance on planning and conservation topics, including *Conservation Area Management*.

### Learned societies

- 7.11 From the early days of the conservation movement, learned societies have played a key role in the protection of the historic environment. A particular characteristic of the UK planning system is the formal role which amenity societies now play. The Ancient Monuments Society, the Council for British Archaeology, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society, the Twentieth Century Society and the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland are, through their casework, able to offer valuable advice in respect of proposals affecting historic buildings.
- 7.12 The Garden History Society is frequently consulted on relevant proposals. In addition to casework the amenity societies are able to offer valuable practical advice on a whole range of conservation matters.
- 7.13 The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has, since the nineteenth century, produced valuable advice on techniques for the repair of historic buildings. Early publications such as that by Powys, *The Repair of Ancient Buildings*, gave sound, if doctrinal, advice on repair philosophies and techniques. More recently SPAB has produced an extensive range of inexpensive guide leaflets on conservation techniques, ranging from general advice on principles to the detailed repair of specific building components. It also runs a telephone advice helpline (refer to List of Organizations, p. 54 for details).
- 7.14 Similarly, both the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society produce excellent advisory material on a range of technical matters, from doors and windows to wallpapers and paint finishes. (Full sets of such leaflets are available from the addresses given in List of Organizations, pp. 52 and 54.) This high quality and easily obtainable advice is recommended for all who are involved in dealing with proposals affecting historic buildings.

### Civic Trust, Scottish Civic Trust

- 7.15 The Civic Trusts are prominent amenity bodies producing publications, staging events and administrating the well-established annual Civic Trust Awards. The Scottish Civic Trust produces a Buildings at Risk Register on behalf of Historic Scotland, including both listed and unlisted buildings in need of repair or reuse.

### Advisory bodies

- 7.16 Advice on a wide variety of conservation topics can be sought from various national advisory bodies throughout the UK. In the case of ecclesiastical buildings, authoritative advice can be obtained from bodies dealing with different religious denominations. For Church of England buildings the Council for the Care of Churches, the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches are all potential sources of advice. In Scotland an advisory body exists for redundant viaducts.

### Other associations

- 7.17 A number of nationally-based conservation associations exist, offering further helpful advice and information. For example, the Association of Preservation Trusts (APT)

provides advice in connection with the formation and management of Building Preservation Trusts (organizations formed to rescue threatened historic buildings). APT publishes extremely useful guidance notes and offers practical advice to local authorities and voluntary groups. Save Britain's Heritage is a pressure group which campaigns on behalf of buildings at risk and has produced many valuable reports and studies. In Scotland, the built heritage bodies have combined to form a single network organization: the Scottish Environmental and Amenity Link (SEAL) now known as the Built Environment Forum.

## **Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England and the National Monuments Record**

- 7.18 Particularly useful is information held by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England (now part of English Heritage) and equivalent organizations in Scotland and Wales. Available material includes photographs, aerial photographs, measured drawings, written histories and thematic studies on particular building types. Such information will normally be dated, clearly catalogued and readily accessible from the Commission. Copies of archive material can usually be obtained at a small charge. The National Monuments Record has a rapid Internet service which can confirm whether a building is listed and forward a copy of the statutory description. Historic Scotland provides the same information on CD-ROM, and buildings and sites are part of the Scottish Cultural Resource Advisory Network (SCRAN) project on the Internet.

## **Consultants**

- 7.19 Specialist conservation consultants, who can be found through the RTPI *Planning Consultants Directory* and other sources such as the *Building Conservation Directory*, will sometimes offer initial general advice on a specific case free of charge, although subsequent time will usually be charged. Where complex legal interpretation is required, a specialist barrister or solicitor may be approached through a Chartered Town Planner.

## **Other organizations**

- 7.20 The National Trust, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the Institute of Field Archaeologists and many other bodies concerned with conservation can be found in the Museums and Galleries Commission Conservation Unit's *Conservation Sourcebook*. In Scotland reference should be made to the National Trust for Scotland and to the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland.

## **Key points to note:**

- Members should seek authoritative advice locally wherever possible.
- Members should consult national bodies about national issues or cases relevant to their interests.

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# Chapter Eight

## Avoiding and resolving conflict

- 8.1 There will be occasions when the national interests of conservation do not coincide with the aspirations of individual owners. These occasions can be minimized by communicating conservation policies clearly. English Heritage's guidance leaflet *Development in the Historic Environment* aims to reduce conflict by setting out the expectations of local authorities and applicants.

### Assembling a team

- 8.2 An essential prerequisite to success is to have in place an appropriate, experienced team, covering relevant disciplines, capable of identifying all issues and opportunities, and convincing others of the merits of a conservation-led approach. The project may require the expertise of specialists from outside the initiating department or organization (refer to Chapter 10, 'Co-ordination').

### Identifying conflict

- 8.3 Key tasks in any conservation initiative are to identify properly likely points or areas of conflict or difficulty, procure necessary information and expertise, and plan appropriate responses.

### Gathering evidence

- 8.4 Evidence is always required, whether to justify or to resist a proposal. Time must be allowed for gathering it, securing human and other resources, and complying with statutory procedures.

### Giving and receiving advice

- 8.5 A particular characteristic of the planner, as distinct from other professionals working in the built-environment field, is the ability to act as the focus for a wide range of often conflicting information and opinion. Giving and receiving advice in an open, objective but informed way is perhaps the most valuable role that a planner can perform. Indeed it is the planner, more than any other player in the conservation process, who can be the conduit for information, leading to the most appropriate decisions being made about the historic environment, and seeing the role of conservation within the context of the wider socio-economic environment and its demands.

### Facilitating communication

- 8.6 Planners are often uniquely placed to act as facilitators of conservation projects through their role as communicators between interested parties. Indeed, communication can make the difference between the success or failure of any conservation opportunity. Lack of proper communication can lead to conflict, misunderstanding and lost opportunities. Being in an overview role, planners can bridge the gap between applicants and their agents, local communities and elected decision makers, unlocking enormous potential for action.

## Commissioning experts

- 8.7 The commissioning of expert consultants is generally most cost-effective for large, specialized, complex, one-off or time-limited tasks which cannot reasonably be undertaken by already committed in-house or generalist personnel. Once this course of action is determined, a clear brief is essential to ensure resources are not wasted. For example, it is rare for in-house expertise to exist on topics such as the lighting of historic buildings and areas, and only a few specialist consultancy firms can offer comprehensive advice on this subject. Effective briefing requires that the terms of reference, deliverables, technical, financial and other criteria by which prospective consultants' submissions will be assessed are clearly defined, quantified (where possible) and adhered to. Authorities and other organizations lacking such expertise should consider approaching suitable consultants to assist in structuring and detailing the entire procurement process. The RTPI can advise further in the selection of suitable consultants through its Planning Consultants Referral Service, and its published guidance on *The Employment of Consultants by Public Authorities* offers useful, practical advice.

### Key points to note:

Members should:

- Identify required expertise and potential areas of conflict early in the life of a project.
- Allow sufficient time to gather evidence and secure resources.
- Facilitate communication and promote user-friendly access.
- Ensure there is an effective brief before engaging consultants.
- Be proactive.

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# Chapter Nine

## Being proactive

- 9.1 By setting objectives and explaining the necessary steps to achieve them, a conservation plan or strategy will establish the basis for positive action. This section details some of the opportunities.

### **Internal training**

- 9.2 The RTPI has in place a framework for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for its members. Proper, planned professional staff development programmes should be a top priority in every employer's regime. These can be delivered through not only formal courses, but also in-house workshops and seminars tailored to the specific requirements of officers and councillors. Specialists can be commissioned to deliver training in the workplace in collaboration with in-house staff. The levels of expertise and awareness vary greatly across the country. Much depends on local political will and resources. Conservation Officers can be enlisted to help develop programmes to raise perception levels throughout the planning service, or even in allied disciplines such as architecture and engineering. Much can be achieved through internal discussion papers, and by highlighting the conservation dimension in development control reports on individual applications.
- 9.3 The widening range of external conservation courses now available is most likely to be of interest to specialists. Alternative, low-cost methods available for all planners include:
- higher education and organization-based short courses
  - conferences, seminars and practical sessions, often organized by regional IHBC and RTPI branches
  - invitations to local known conservation professionals to address the planning team.
- 9.4 There should be co-operation with professional colleagues from outside the organization so that themes of mutual interest can be explored and developed, and ideas and experiences shared. Co-operation across professional disciplines can be particularly helpful: for example, training activities involving planners and engineers involved in decision making in the historic environment. The important factors with regard to training are that the outcomes should be clearly defined and measurable, and that individual and team needs should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure properly structured and relevant training programmes.

### **Engagement and empowerment**

- 9.5 Successful conservation does not only rely on the hard work of appropriately-trained and well-informed individuals. In order to succeed in the longer term, conservation must have the active and enthusiastic support of a wide range of local and community interests. For this reason the engagement and empowerment of local groups and individuals are vital components to a sustainable conservation programme. Rehabilitation and continued prosperity and vitality within a conservation area can only be achieved where there are a broad consensus among residents and users of the area, and common support for conservation aims.

- 9.6 Consultations can take many forms at different stages of a project, including focus groups, seminars, meetings, discussions, invitations to respond to draft documents, and telephone contact. Establishing a close relationship with consultees from the outset is important to the progress and final quality of the product. Empowerment means that the people have a real stake in decision making, including the right to expect the authority to endorse the decision, but effective empowerment depends on highly informed decision making.
- 9.7 Real engagement of people can only help professionals engaged in conservation. This has been proven where local groups have supported designations, monitored change, guided enhancement schemes and resisted unwelcome proposals. Collaborative efforts such as design award schemes can also effectively harness local support in a positive and creative way.

### **Local lectures and seminars**

- 9.8 Part of the process of empowerment and engagement can stem from the activities of planners in spreading the word through local lectures, seminars and other activities. To be seen to be taking an informed interest in a particular area in this way will not only help to enlist local support, but inform and educate local individuals on conservation and planning issues. In this way the vital critical mass of support and activity can be achieved that will help sustain the conservation effort.
- 9.9 Planning officers can tap into existing resources provided by national or local amenity societies. Becoming proactive demands a greater contribution, and this can be achieved by suggesting topics to be covered that are of local importance. The Planning or Conservation Officer may also give talks to such groups as a method of encouraging two-way traffic in environmental considerations.

### **Commissioning studies**

- 9.10 At the heart of the proactive approach to conservation are the identification of specific problems and opportunities, and the finding of solutions through careful and systematic study of the problem. Studies of particular conservation issues within a given area, perhaps commissioned from consultants, can often be the starting point for concerted and effectively targeted action, avoiding a reactive or fire-fighting approach to conservation.
- 9.11 The level of study required in tackling local issues can vary from a full-blown character assessment of an entire area, down to an individual building, street or architect. In commissioning, the brief is all important. Demanding comprehensive responses to an unrealistic brief, in terms of time and budget, is unlikely to result in a high quality, effective product. It is better to commission smaller, more focused studies which can either stand alone or be stockpiled towards a major exercise.
- 9.12 Value-for-money can be improved by inviting proposals against a properly researched fixed fee, rather than seeking a tender price against a brief. In this way the authority's budget is decided at the outset, and the assessment is based on what consultants propose to deliver for that sum.
- 9.13 Negative perspectives, emphasizing restrictions relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas instead of adopting a more positive stance, have little place in achieving conservation objectives. While controls have been most effective in preventing loss, the only truly effective way of ensuring the long term survival of the historic

environment is to ensure that it remains alive, through an imaginative and proactive approach. This can only be achieved when conservation is seen as part of the mainstream of planning activity, recognizing, making and seizing opportunities.

- 9.14 Being proactive means having the ability to recognize potential and facilitate action by making the most of available resources and opportunities. In this regard the planner can often be a key player in terms of facilitating and promoting conservation activity on individual sites and throughout an area.

**Key points to note:**

- Members should promote internal training regimes in conservation.
- Engagement and empowerment of the general public should be part of any conservation strategy.
- Commissioning studies can focus and resolve issues and problems.
- A positive approach to conservation is more effective than a negative one.



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# Chapter Ten

## Co-ordination

- 10.1 Planners are the most appropriate professionals to co-ordinate activity across the spectrum of work in the historic environment. The country's planning regime is the source of control of most development, and affects a wide range of professional and private interests. Therefore those involved in conservation should be able to co-ordinate as well as collaborate with others, particularly where complex considerations affecting whole areas are concerned. Recognizing the roles, responsibilities and potential of others (professional and non-professional alike) is a key skill.
- 10.2 Successful conservation activity will require close liaison and co-operation between planners and other professionals involved in the development process. They include engineers, architects, building surveyors, archaeologists, landscape architects and legal advisers, as well as services specialists, materials analysts, historians, transport planners, urban designers, interior conservators, building managers, leisure and tourism consultants, economists, valuers, estate managers and many others.

### **Internal and external relationships**

- 10.3 The establishment and maintenance of an effective network of links within the conservation world is vital for the proactive practitioner. The links can take many forms and be at various levels, but they are likely to range from constructive working relationships with national advisory bodies, such as English Heritage, Historic Scotland and CADW, to liaison with learned societies and (crucially) links with local amenity and community groups whose influence can be fundamentally important to the long-term success of a conservation strategy. Cultivating these links takes time, but can bring lasting benefits. At the most elementary level it is vital to establish links with owners of historic property, through publicity material and wider education initiatives.
- 10.4 Internal links comprise those within an authority between Planning Officers, Conservation Officers and other departments. Interdepartmental contact provides a most effective opportunity for positive action. The interest of engineers, architects, landscape architects, surveyors, parks managers and many other professionals should be cultivated and guided in adopting and resourcing sound conservation principles in their work, and forming project teams wherever possible.
- 10.5 External links can be established with:
- local and national amenity societies
  - individuals with local or specialized knowledge
  - English Heritage liaison officers
  - the English Heritage central support system
  - Historic Scotland area inspectors
  - the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

### **Interdepartmental relationships**

- 10.6 Teamwork is imperative. Yet there are still large organizations with different administrations pulling in opposite directions, such as the housing department that

### **Example**

Planners in Wandsworth promoted an inter-service project team which briefed, designed and implemented construction of an award-winning scheme for a public space in a Conservation Area. It involved highway pedestrianization, landscape design, engineering, public consultation and private sector building construction.

manufactures PVCu windows while their use is condemned in the planning department. Corporate working improves efficiency and spares embarrassment. The considerable commitment needed to break down barriers will be repaid many times over in creative energy, productivity and lasting benefit to the environment.

### **Public consultation on policy and promotion**

- 10.7 Local Plans, Supplementary Planning Guidance and briefs are powerful tools which can be more effective when actively supported by the public through consultations. The level and nature of consultation will depend greatly on the status of the subject set against national, regional or local criteria. Policy and strategy promotion should be specific and responsive to local conditions, and should avoid merely repeating government advice.
- 10.8 Local conservation policy creation should be informed by local issues and problems. In some areas, for example, there may need to be an emphasis on the role of conservation in assisting regeneration, while in others, resisting harmful change may be the priority. Building on established statutory policy can be extremely effective.

### **Application progress**

- 10.9 Productive working relationships with other groups and professionals are particularly important in the context of monitoring the progress of development proposals through the planning application and Listed Building consent process. Close co-operation and mutual understanding of the needs of participating groups and individuals are essential for the efficient and smooth running of the process.
- 10.10 For the progress of a particular application to be as efficient as possible, timely information needs to be made available by planners to other players in the process, and the lines of communication need to be kept open in order to monitor any problems or potential delay. This is true whether the liaison is between professional colleagues, or with external groups such as parish councils or amenity societies.

### **Key points to note:**

- Members should identify and harness the roles and contributions of others.
- Members should establish effective internal and external links.
- Members should promote team building, planned and co-ordinated action.
- Members should co-ordinate components, inputs, communication and feedback in the application process.

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# Chapter Eleven

## Recording and evaluating

### The importance of databases

- 11.1 The prime tool for managing the historic environment is basic 'stock-control'. Most authorities now have the capability, through GIS, to organize large amounts of data. As storage capacity increases, full pictorial records are increasingly possible. Photographs are particularly useful for development control and enforcement if they are updated on a regular basis. The accumulation of the database can be carried out over a period of time, and it can be enlarged as data are collected, but the choice of system must guard against obsolescence and incompatibility.

### Types of data

- 11.2 Data may comprise existing records or extracts, transposed onto a master database, or specially commissioned work for a specific purpose. In all cases it is vital that the source is always identified, in enough detail for later researchers to verify or expand upon it. There are many Conservation Area designation documents and Listed Building designations which suffer from incompleteness and inaccuracy. These can be misleading, embarrassing, or harmful to appeal cases.
- 11.3 Photographs are always extremely important, but until recently have been absent from many records. New technology enables easily accessible visual information to be included in ordinary word-processed documents. All historic environment applications should include a requirement for photographs of the building, in context, and opportunities should be provided for direct input into the database from digital media.
- 11.4 Drawings are now increasingly produced on CAD systems, and although there are still cross-platform compatibility problems, the technology exists for compact storage of high volumes of graphic information. Many authorities have microfiche records, but these have not proved entirely satisfactory as a foolproof, easily accessible tool for posterity. Very large drawings are not easily stored, but reproductions down to A3 or A4 are now very easily achieved with CAD printouts, and use of colour is once again becoming a common element in drawings.
- 11.5 The direct input of digital graphics into a database, and alterations and variations in scale, are also options for applicants.
- 11.6 Consulting electronically is also an option for local authorities. Some authorities have already created their own websites so that drawings and other application documents can be accessed from any remote computer.
- 11.7 Many of the early historical graphic and textural data that were photocopied onto thermal paper decayed quickly. Scanning these items into a database and printing them out when required is a more sustainable data management option. It is important that the source is always recorded, together with details of original scale and size. Designers and users of electronic systems should ensure that suitable measures are put in place to protect against data loss and to ensure that obsolescence of the software will not render the data unusable in future. Hard copies should always be retained where possible.

## Quality Assurance

- 11.8 The establishment of Quality Assurance (QA) criteria in conservation planning should be considered. Adopting basic data-gathering and management procedures as part of day to day working will ensure cost-effective management and understanding of the historic environment.

### Example

Knowsley MBC has established a QA-based system for Building Conservation Grants, including a process flowchart, defined procedure, master database record sheet and guidance notes.

- 11.9 The criteria for QA certification are usually basic and simple, and can often be adapted from those already in use. Elementary awareness and training sessions for both administrative and professional staff can provide an initial system quickly. Consultants can establish quality control methodologies, and certification can be obtained for a fee. The establishment of processes can be incorporated, in outline, in Local Plans, UDPs, SPG and other published documents. Application procedures will also need to be included.
- 11.10 This need not be a universal ‘big-bang’ approach, and often subtle methods and longer timescales are more effective at establishing quality controls. An agreed objective must be achievable, and an acceptable timescale must be agreed. Incrementalism allows both internal and external interests to gain familiarity and expertise.
- 11.11 The true test of any system is whether it consistently works well over time. There is as yet no common system in use, but the need to access and share information will increasingly require compatibility in future. From the outset, circulation and monitoring are as important as system design, evaluation, adjustments and upgrading intervals, and longevity. In many respects the use of hard data record cards is still advantageous as they do not become obsolete, and they are in a format that is easy to update.

### Key points to note:

- Data sources should be clearly and accurately identified.
- Priority should be given to designing, establishing and maintaining an historic environment database.
- Systems should be user-friendly and readily accessible, internally and externally.
- Criteria for ensuring a high quality output and client/customer satisfaction should be developed and implemented.
- Continual development and evaluation of skill, procedure and product are essential.

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# Chapter Twelve

## Conclusions

- 12.1 There is no formal requirement for an authority to produce a conservation strategy. However, such a document would aid the internal corporate understanding of the council's conservation aims and objectives and, equally important, set them out in one place for the benefit of the public. Such a document might deal with the following items.

### **The legislation and policy advice**

- 12.2 In England the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the main legislative policy base for the conservation of the historic environment, and PPG15 (*Planning and the Historic Environment*) provides the main source of detailed advice for the implementation of that policy. This Good Practice Guide also includes references to other PPGs, to Local Plan and UDP policies, and to a number of English Heritage documents that provide more detailed but less formal advice on particular issues. In almost all cases, the responsibility for the operation of the legislation (Listed Building control, planning control involving Listed Buildings, development within Conservation Areas, and planning control of development affecting the setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) rests with the local planning authority. Reference has been made throughout the text to the differences in process and the relevant policy and advice documents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **Listed Building control**

- 12.3 In England, the Schedule of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest is compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with English Heritage acting as advisers. The lists are supplied to local planning authorities for their own use and also so they can be placed on public deposit for use by applicants and their advisers. This information is now also available on a computer database from English Heritage. The listing description is the starting point for the consideration of any development involving a Listed Building or its setting. Authorities should seek, and applicants' advisers should provide, a supporting statement setting out why the proposal is necessary and its impact upon the special interest of the Listed Building. It will help considerably if authorities issue some form of guidance on the scope and format of these statements.

### **Conservation Area designation**

- 12.4 In order to assess whether the designation of a possible Conservation Area is justified, an appraisal of its character and appearance should be prepared. The public should also be consulted as part of this process. If designation does go ahead, the appraisal should form the policy basis for future development control within the Conservation Area, and also provide the basis for plans for its enhancement.

### **Local Plan and UDP policies**

- 12.5 The Local Plan or UDP should include planning policies that are directly related to the preservation of Listed Buildings and the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. It is important to take account of the fact that the Local Plan is the council's

conservation policy statement for public consumption and a key part of its conservation strategy. As such the policies should not be prescriptive or simply restate national advice. They should be seeking to identify and then strengthen the local character and quality of the historic environment.

### **Enhancement and implementation**

- 12.6 The development of proposals to achieve the enhancement of Conservation Areas and to protect Listed Buildings is an important part of a conservation strategy. Sometimes this can be undertaken directly by an authority within its own budget, but even here a corporate approach and commitment are required. However, it is more likely that a number of agencies will be involved, particularly in major projects. Planners representing authorities, owners and applicants will be involved in a variety of roles, but corporate and facilitating skills will be particularly important.

### **Availability and preparation of documents**

- 12.7 Copies of all relevant conservation policy and advice documents should be readily available for staff in both the private and public sector, and also for the public. The documents should be consulted at an early stage to ensure that a thorough understanding and appreciation of the conservation process is achieved on each particular conservation issue, by both the local authority and the applicant. While some of these documents have to conform to formal government advice, the vast majority are produced by local authorities to help owners, applicants and their advisers to understand the council's conservation policies. The more user-friendly the format and the plainer the English, the more likely it is that this will be achieved. This approach will also have the benefit of removing some of the mystique from conservation within authorities, and contribute to its greater corporate acceptance and support.

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# Summary of key points

- Members have a duty to assist the preservation of the historic environment.
- Members should be aware of and acknowledge the conservation dimension in their work.
- Members should know when and where to seek specialist conservation advice.

- Members should have a working knowledge of current conservation law, definitions, guidance and sources of information.
- Members should have a general awareness of current conservation thinking, including sustainable development.

- Members should develop skills or seek specialist advice in specifying and using sanctions, incentives and other techniques for conservation.
- Advice aimed at raising owners' awareness of policy and best practice is very cost-effective in achieving conservation and preventing neglect or harmful work.

## Members should:

- Take account of changing perceptions of cultural or historic importance.
- Define character and appearance rigorously, and state the method used.
- Identify the benefits to the public arising from conservation.
- Allocate sufficient resources to achieve the required tasks.
- Stress local identity as a positive element of character.
- Encourage maximum participation.
- Programme and undertake regular reviews of areas of special character and consider designation as conservation areas.

- Members should interpret national policies in a local context.
- Members should co-ordinate land use and conservation policies.
- Members should not allow personal taste to affect their judgement.
- Members should ensure that relevant planning processes are easily accessible to, and understood by, all.
- Members should promote effective collaboration and consultation.
- Members should review perceptions of what is worth conserving.
- Members should acknowledge the contribution of conservation to regeneration and other programmes such as sustainability.
- Well aimed, comprehensive local plan policies are essential.
- Members should develop and apply a methodology for judging quality in historic environments.
- Members should value public enthusiasm for conservation.

- Application guidance should make clear what information is required, relative to size and complexity.
- Pre-application contact between applicant and authority should include a site inspection wherever possible.
- Consultants should be fully conversant with the site and relevant conservation criteria.

- The need for all inputs and principal issues should be identified and delivery targets set before the case is allocated.
- Expert conservation advice should be cited and carry appropriate authority.
- Consultations should include mechanisms for dialogue, feedback and further information before decision.
- Conservation Area Advisory Committees should be properly funded and supported.

- Members should seek authoritative advice locally wherever possible.
- Members should consult national bodies about national issues or cases relevant to their interests.

Members should:

- Identify required expertise and potential areas of conflict early in the life of a project.
- Allow sufficient time to gather evidence and secure resources.
- Facilitate communication and promote user-friendly access.
- Ensure there is an effective brief before engaging consultants.
- Be proactive.

- Members should promote internal training regimes in conservation.
- Engagement and empowerment of the general public should be part of any conservation strategy.
- Commissioning studies can focus and resolve issues and problems.
- A positive approach to conservation is more effective than a negative one.

- Members should identify and harness the roles and contributions of others.
- Members should establish effective internal and external links.
- Members should promote team building, planned and co-ordinated action.
- Members should co-ordinate components, inputs, communication and feedback in the application process.

- Data sources should be clearly and accurately identified.
- Priority should be given to designing, establishing and maintaining an historic environment database.
- Systems should be user-friendly and readily accessible, internally and externally.
- Criteria for ensuring a high quality output and client/customer satisfaction should be developed and implemented.
- Continual development and evaluation of skill, procedure and product are essential.

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Advisory Body for Redundant Churches  
Fielden House  
13 Little College Street  
London  
SW1P 3SH  
Tel. 020 7222 9603

Ancient Monuments Society  
St Ann's Vestry Hall  
2 Church Entry  
London  
EC4 5HB  
Tel. 020 7236 3934  
[www.salvo.co.uk/m-ams-uk.htm](http://www.salvo.co.uk/m-ams-uk.htm)

Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland  
The Glasite Meeting House  
33 Barony Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 6NX  
Tel. 0131 557 0019  
[www.ahss.org.uk](http://www.ahss.org.uk)

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers  
Caroline Ingle  
Heritage Conservation Group  
Planning Division  
Essex County Council  
County Hall  
Chelmsford  
CM1 1QH  
Tel. 01245 437676  
[www.algao.org.uk](http://www.algao.org.uk)

Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland  
Gladstone's Land (3rd Floor)  
483 Lawnmarket  
Edinburgh  
EH1 2NT  
Tel. 0131 225 7012  
[www.aprs.org.uk](http://www.aprs.org.uk)

Association of Preservation Trusts  
Clareville House  
26/27 Oxendon Street  
London  
SW1Y 4EL  
Tel 020 7930 1629  
[www.heritage.co.uk/apt](http://www.heritage.co.uk/apt)

Association of Regional and Island Archaeologists  
per Lorna Main  
Environmental Services  
Stirling Council  
Tel. 01786 442752

Built Environment Forum  
*[formerly SEAL]*  
per Alan Jeffrey  
15 West Shore  
Pitenweem  
Fife  
KY10 2NU  
Tel. 01333 313432

CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
Tel. 029 2050 0200  
[www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England  
Fielden House  
13 Little College Street  
London  
SW1P 3SH  
Tel. 020 7898 1866  
Email: [equiries@cfce.c-of-e.org.uk](mailto:equiries@cfce.c-of-e.org.uk)

Civic Trust for Wales  
2nd Floor, Empire House  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5FN  
Tel. 029 2048 4606  
[www.civictrustwales.demon.co.uk](http://www.civictrustwales.demon.co.uk)

Conference on Training in Architectural Conservation  
24th Floor, Portland House  
Stag Place  
London  
SW1E 5EE  
Tel. 020 7973 3615  
<http://homepages.tcp.co.uk/~cotec>

Council for British Archaeology  
Bowes Morrell House  
111 Walmgate  
York  
YO1 9WA  
Tel. 01904 671417  
[www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)

Council for the Care of Churches  
Fielden House  
Little College Street  
London  
SW1P 3SH  
Tel. 020 7898 1866  
Email: [enquiries@ccc.c-of.e.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccc.c-of.e.org.uk)

Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries  
16 Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1H 9AA  
Tel. 020 7273 1444  
[www.resource.gov.uk](http://www.resource.gov.uk)

Council for the Preservation of Rural England  
Warwick House  
25 Buckingham Palace Road  
London  
SW1W 0PP  
Tel. 020 7976 6433  
[www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU  
Tel. 020 7944 3000  
[www.detr.gov.uk](http://www.detr.gov.uk)

Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland  
Environment and Heritage Service  
[www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk)

Department of Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1Y 5DH  
Tel. 020 7211 6200  
[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

English Heritage  
PO Box 569  
Swindon  
SN2 2YP  
Tel. 01793 414910  
(National Monuments Record enquiries:  
01793 414600)  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

English Historic Towns Forum  
PO Box 22  
Bristol  
BS16 1RZ  
Tel. 0117 975 0459  
[www.ehtf.org.uk](http://www.ehtf.org.uk)

Garden History Society  
70 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6BP  
Tel. 020 7608 2409  
[www.gardenhistorysociety.org](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org)

The Georgian Group  
6 Fitzroy Square  
London  
W1P 6DX  
Tel. 020 7387 1720  
[www.heritage.co.uk/georgian](http://www.heritage.co.uk/georgian)

Heritage Lottery Fund  
7 Holbein Place  
London  
SW1W 8NR  
Tel. 020 7591 6000  
[www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

Historic Burghs Association of Scotland  
PO box 1124  
Stirling  
FK9 4ZW  
Tel. 01786 833318

Historic Scotland  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH  
Tel. 0131 668 8600  
[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

Institute of Field Archaeologists  
University of Reading  
2 Earley Gate  
PO Box 239  
Reading  
RG6 6AU  
Tel. 0118 931 6446  
[www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net)

International Council on Monuments and Sites  
10 Barley Mow Passage  
London  
W4 4PH  
Tel. 020 8994 6477  
[www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)

Institute of Historic Building Conservation  
3 Stafford Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN2 4QZ  
[www.inbc.org.uk](http://www.inbc.org.uk)

Museums and Galleries Commission  
[www.museums.gov.uk](http://www.museums.gov.uk)  
See Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries

National Trust  
36 Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1H 9AS  
Tel. 020 7222 9251  
[www.nationaltrust.otg.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.otg.uk)

National Trust for Scotland  
28 Charlotte Square  
Edinburgh  
EH2 4ET  
Tel. 0131 243 9300  
[www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland  
John Sinclair House  
16 Bernard Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9NX  
Tel. 0131 662 1456  
[www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales  
[www.rcahmw.org.uk](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk)

Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England  
[since April 1999 united with English Heritage]  
National Monuments Record Centre  
Kemble Drive  
Swindon  
SN2 2GZ  
01793 414700  
[www.rchme.gov.uk](http://www.rchme.gov.uk)

Royal Town Planning Institute  
26 Portland Place  
London  
W1N 4BE  
Tel. 020 7636 9107  
[www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

*From 1 April 2001:*  
41 Botolph Lane  
London  
EC3R 8DL

RTPI Planning Consultants Referral Service  
Croner.CCH  
12–18 Grosvenor Gardens  
London  
SW1W 0DH  
Tel 020 7824 8257

Save Britain's Heritage  
70 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6EJ  
Tel. 020 7253 3500  
[www.savebritainsheritage.org](http://www.savebritainsheritage.org)

SEAL  
See Built Environment Forum

Scottish Civic Trust  
The Tobacco Merchants House  
42 Miller Street  
Glasgow  
G1 1DT  
Te. 0141 221 1466  
[www.scotnet.co.uk/sct](http://www.scotnet.co.uk/sct)

Scottish Cultural Resource Advisory Network  
SCRAN  
Abden House  
1 Marchhall Crescent  
Prestonfield  
Edinburgh  
EH16 5HP  
Tel. 0131 662 1211  
[www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk)

Scottish Viaducts Committee  
per Scottish Civic Trust  
42 Miller Street  
Glasgow  
G1 1DT  
Tel. 0141 221 1466

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
37 Spital Square  
London  
E1 6DY  
Tel. 020 7377 1644  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

Twentieth Century Society  
77 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6EJ  
Tel. 020 7250 3857  
[www.c20society.demon.co.uk](http://www.c20society.demon.co.uk)

Victorian Society  
1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
London  
W4 1TT  
Tel. 020 8994 1019  
[www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)



