

CHAPTER 4

CHANGES AFFECTING LISTED BUILDINGS

ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

- 4.1 The character of some Listed buildings will be harmed by even a very small amount of alteration or extension. Other Listed buildings are more capable of change while still retaining their character and special historic interest.
- 4.2 Paragraph 3.13 of PPG15 states: *'Many Listed Buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses.'* However, PPG15 also mentions: *'Some Listed Buildings are the subject of successive applications for alteration or extension; in such cases it needs to be borne in mind that minor works of indifferent quality, which may seem individually of little importance, can cumulatively be very destructive of a building's special interest.'*
- 4.3 However, every building has a **finite capacity** for alteration and extension; cumulative works can have a negative impact and harm the setting or character of the Listed Building.
- 4.4 Key principles of alterations and repairs to a Listed Building:
- **Necessity:** replace only is necessary, sympathetic alterations in relation to the buildings age and character.
 - **Honesty:** allow the works to be 'of their time' and allowing the building's history and evolution to be evident.
 - **Reversibility:** repairs and alterations that can be reversed later, perhaps when technology or investigative techniques have advanced to allow a more appropriate resolution.
 - **Champion good design:** it is the responsibility of the Council to champion good design, appropriate methods and materials. The Council always seek to improve and enhance the character and setting of any Listed Building.
- 4.5 PPG15 states that any proposal for alterations to a Listed Building should be *justified* in why the works are **necessary** or **desirable**. The necessity or desirability should be in terms of the building itself over the longer term, not the current owner.
- 4.6 Alterations, which affect the character or appearance of a Listed Building, will almost always require Listed Building Consent. The term 'alteration' can include everything from changing a window to altering the building's internal layout or floor plan. Alterations will need to be justified and accord with National legislation,

Guidance and local policy requirements. In addition, it is recommended that a preliminary informal consultation take place with the Conservation and Design Service within South Cambridgeshire District Council. This will allow a process of consideration and feedback from the team as to whether or not the proposal would be supported by officers if an application was submitted or what amendments might be appropriate to obtain that support. Considered and informed documentation submitted during early consultations will afford officers the opportunity to understand and comment constructively on the proposal; when the application is submitted it should then be processed relatively smoothly.

- 4.7 Investigative opening up works may be supported, but only if the Council is made aware of what works are proposed, how the works are to be carried out and what evidence exists to support that opening up. The Council **must** be notified **before** any works take place and a site visit may be required before permission is granted to carry out such investigations.
- 4.8 One example is when a Listed Building has been previously (before the building was Listed) covered in a cementitious render and the intent is to remove and replace with an appropriate lime render to allow the building to breathe. It might be acceptable to remove a small area to determine the quality of the materials behind and to determine if the removal of the render is possible without substantially damaging the historic fabric. Or when there is a question about what might exist behind recent wall covering, a modern fireplace or any query about what cannot be seen, the Council may support investigative works.

EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

- 4.9 Extensions to a Listed Building will require formal Listed Building Consent and may also require Planning permission.
- 4.10 Section 3.13 of PPG15 states that every building has a finite capacity for extension. Therefore, when considering the purchase of a Listed Building, it is better to determine if the existing building meets the current needs as opposed to assuming that the building could be extended further. The individual needs of a particular owner should not impose on the needs of the building. In certain circumstances the purchase of a Listed Building may not be appropriate if it does not already offer the amount of accommodation required. There will be cases when further extensions to accommodate the changing needs of an existing owner will also not be considered desirable.
- 4.11 Extensions can significantly affect the character, appearance and setting of a Listed Building and the location, scale, form and massing is critical. Traditionally historic buildings were often extended by the addition of a modest lean-to on the rear or side elevation. Historically, there were occasions when two storey extensions were built.

- 4.12 The design of any extension will require careful consideration and should be subservient to the original Listed Building. An extension should be set back from the Listed Building to create a visual separation. It might be traditional in appearance or contemporary (though such an approach will need to be restrained so as not to 'draw the eye' away from the Listed Building) depending on the individual circumstances. Any proposal should retain the original uses and functions of the original historic dwelling. The reason for this is to ensure that the historic part of the building remains the focus.
- 4.13 Extensions should be kept to one or one and a half storeys in height in order to ensure the extension is both visually subservient and proportionate. Two-storey extensions will not generally be supported. Flat roofs are not historically appropriate to a Listed Building, nor are they recommended due to problems that can occur with rainwater disposal. The form of any extension should minimise the amount of historic fabric that will be covered up as a result.
- 4.14 The principle of any extension should be discussed with the historic building officer at the outset to ensure an appropriate solution can be agreed.

LOSS OF HISTORIC FABRIC

- 4.15 Loss of historic fabric is an important consideration when designing an extension and should be minimised by using existing openings where possible.
- 4.16 Any new openings will be reviewed to ensure that their impact on the Listed Building is minimised, sympathetic to the structure and appropriate to the overall design.

DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDING

Justification for demolition

- 4.17 Any proposal for the demolition of a Listed Building will need to have substantial justification, showing that the existing building is not capable of being repaired or reused. The complete demolition of a historic building is rarely necessary, especially if a building has been properly maintained. The Statutory Consultees will be consulted on any proposal for the demolition of a Listed Building.
- 4.18 It is also important to note that where consent is granted to demolish a Listed Building there is no presumption that a replacement structure would be approved. Any new development will be considered on its own merits within the context of the relevant Development Control Policies.
- 4.19 Section 3.17 of PPG15 states that consent should not be granted unless:
- All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses, and these efforts have failed.

- That preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible.
- That redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community, which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

4.20 Section 3.19 of PPG15 states the following considerations should be addressed when proposing the demolition of a Listed Building:

- The condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use. Any such assessment should be based on consistent and long-term assumptions. In the rare cases where it is clear that a building has been deliberately neglected in the hope of obtaining consent for demolition, less weight should be given to the costs of repair.
- The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use. The Secretary of State would not expect Listed Building Consent to be granted for demolition unless the authority (or where appropriate the Secretary of State himself) is satisfied that real efforts have been made without success to continue the present use or to find compatible alternative uses for the building.
- The merits of alternative proposals for the site. Whilst these are a material consideration, the Secretaries of State take the view that subjective claim for the architectural merits of proposed replacement buildings should not in themselves be held to justify the demolition of any Listed Building. Even here, it will often be feasible to incorporate Listed Buildings within new development, and this option should be carefully considered: the challenge presented by retaining Listed Buildings can be a stimulus to imaginative new design to accommodate them.

4.21 Any application for the demolition of a Listed Building must include:

- A structural engineers report providing evidence that the building is incapable of being economically repaired
- Clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses, and these efforts have failed
- That preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable
- Or that redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community, which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

However, consent for demolition will not be given simply because redevelopment is economically more attractive to the developer than repair and re-use of a historic building.

4.22 The presumption is that the Listed Building will be retained.

Demolition of Curtilage Listed Building

4.23 A Curtilage Listed Building is any building or structure within the historic boundaries of the Listed Building that has a historic relationship to the Listed Building and was built before 1 July 1948. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 confirms that a Curtilage Listed Buildings should be treated the same as Listed Buildings.

4.24 Any proposal for the demolition of a Curtilage Listed Building would be scrutinised using the criteria given for Listed Buildings above. There is a presumption that a Curtilage Listed structure, which makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Listed Building, will be retained.

4.25 Demolition of walls, gates or fences within the curtilage of a Listed Building may require Listed Building Consent. Contact the Council to discuss any proposal prior to carrying out any works.

The Shimizu Case

4.26 The Shimizu Case was a House of Lords judgement (1997) that defined demolition in respect of Listed Buildings. The judgement differentiated the definitions between 'demolition' and 'alteration' so that demolition now refers to only total demolition and does not include partial demolition, which is now considered an alteration. This has relevance as to how an application is described and considered.

CHANGE OF USE OF LISTED BUILDINGS

4.27 When a Listed Building or Curtilage Listed Building is redundant; the Council might support a change of use to enable the building to be brought back into use. However, the best use for any historic building is generally the use it was intended and built for. New uses may be inappropriate, due to potential loss of historic fabric or harm to the special character and appearance of the Listed Building. It may be appropriate to use the building for ancillary functions such as low-key storage.

4.28 A planning officer can offer more advice about change of use, as this is likely to require Planning permission. In considering Listed Building applications, implications including alterations to the plan form, introduction of new services and fire protection all need to be considered. The building should be capable of being converted into the new use without substantial extensions or modifications, especially if the change of use would require new openings, staircases, and substantial subdivisions to the historic floor plan or loss of historic fabric. Additional

information may be required to justify a change of use, such as evidence of the building's redundancy, financial evidence, structural reports, etc.

4.29 It is necessary for the requirements of the new use to be accommodated within the building without seriously compromising the architectural character and / or historic fabric. Issues may include the following:

- Fire & Safety: additional means of escape, protected stairs, upgrading of existing doors, partitions
- Physical barriers to access: thresholds, ramps, types of door furniture
- Sub-division of existing rooms/spaces: impact on cornicing, panelling, plan form
- Servicing: introduction of pipe work, electrical cabling, altering internal environment
- Floor loadings: strengthening existing floor structures
- Sound insulation: increased insulation requirements for floors, walls and glazing
- Thermal performance: increased insulation requirements for floors walls roofs and glazing

4.30 Can the requirements of the new use be accommodated without seriously compromising its setting? Issues may include the following:

- Increased car parking: location, surfacing, entrance / exit, sight lines
- Division of open spaces: building groups, farmyards
- Separation from any historically linked curtilage buildings
- Fragmentation of the long term management of the buildings
- Impact on standing or buried archaeological remains
- Hard and soft landscaping: character of existing landscaping
- Effect on the broader character of the Conservation Area

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

4.31 Listed Buildings, in particular dwellings, can be or have been converted to a variety of commercial uses including offices, surgeries and nursing homes. Planning permission will be required for a change of use and Listed Building Consent for any

alterations that affect the character and appearance of the Listed Building and are therefore unlikely to be supported.

- 4.32 Alterations required for the new use should be minimal and should respect the historic plan form. Removal of historic partition walls to create open plan offices would result in a significant loss of historic fabric. Existing historic features and fittings, such as fireplaces, cupboards and panelling should be retained.
- 4.33 Floor loadings can become an issue where an office or storage use is proposed and consideration should be given to what strengthening works would be required and if the work is appropriate. A Structural Engineer's report will be required to support an application and should detail what works are required and why.
- 4.34 The introduction of new services should form part of the Listed Building application and can cover: additional wiring, IT support, heating or cooling systems, modern technology and computer equipment, etc. These should be discreetly sited and respect the historic fabric. The impact of access points, fire and safety requirements should also be considered.

DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GROUNDS OF LISTED BUILDINGS

- 4.35 Development within the curtilage of a Listed Building will almost always require planning permission. The District Council will advise on permitted development. (Works such as extensions which affect the character of the Listed Building or Curtilage Listed Buildings are also likely to require Listed Building consent as described elsewhere in this document.)
- 4.36 Any development within the grounds of a Listed Building is likely to impact on the Listed Building and the design and location of new structures must be carefully considered. For example: a relatively large building might be out of proportion with and dominate a historic building; and a new structure built close to a Listed Building could hide or distract from it. New buildings should normally be subservient to the listed building and be sited some distance from it.

SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

- 4.37 Decisions on Planning and Listed Building Consent applications need to consider their impact on the setting of listed buildings. The land and structures contained within the curtilage are likely to be an important part of that setting. For example, a principal building, and its grounds and ancillary structures, may all be part of an integrated design.
- 4.38 The setting can, however, extend much further than the curtilage and may often include land some distance from it. It includes landscapes, street scenes and layouts that are part of a building's context, and views to and from the Listed Building.

- 4.39 The setting may encompass a number of other properties. The setting of individual Listed Buildings very often owes its character to the harmony produced by a particular grouping of buildings (not necessarily all of great individual merit) and to the quality of the spaces created between them.
- 4.40 Where a Listed Building forms an important visual element in a street, consideration should be given to any development within the setting of the building. A proposed high or bulky building might also affect the setting of a Listed Building some distance away, or alter views of a historic skyline. In some cases, setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of a building's surroundings.
- 4.41 There is a presumption that the Council will resist any application that:
- Would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage buildings in scale, form, massing or appearance,
 - Would damage the context, attractiveness or viability of a Listed Building,
 - Would harm the visual, character or morphological relationship between the building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings, or built surroundings
 - Would damage archaeological remains (above or below ground) of importance unless some exceptional, overriding need can be demonstrated, in which case conditions may be applied to protect and preserve particular features or aspects of the archaeology
 - Would impact on a Conservation Area