



## City of Westminster

### **PLEASE NOTE**

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies and planning, building control and other legislation and regulations referred to in the text of this guide were current at the time of publication. Because this guidance is an electronic version of the printed guidance as approved and adopted, these references have NOT been changed. For ease of contact; names, telephone numbers and locations have been regarded as non-material editorial changes and have been updated.

As UDP policies and government legislation may have changed over time, before carrying out any work, it is recommended that you consult the current UDP

<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/planningandlicensing/udp/index.cfm> for policy revisions and you may wish to check with planning and/or building control officers about your proposal

## **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

### **REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS**



## **Repairs and Alterations to Listed Building Supplementary Planning Guidance**

**This leaflet was adopted for consultation purposed on 17.7.1995.**

**Following a comprehensive consultation process the leaflet was adopted as supplementary planning guidance on 7.12.1995**

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#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This document is intended to help owners, occupiers and potential purchasers of listed buildings in Westminster, and their agents, to understand the system of listed building control, and the standards applied by the City Council. The guidance set out below, including the policies set out in section 2, are supplementary to the City Council's Unitary Development Plan, and in particular Chapter 9 'Conservation and Design.' It is also complementary to Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG 15), including the technical guidance in Annex C, to which the City Council must have regard in reaching decisions on applications for listed building consent.

1.2 Westminster is an historic city containing many outstanding national monuments and a great diversity of building types. There are approximately 11,000 listed buildings and structures in the city, and the City Council receives over 1,000 applications annually for consent to alter them. The best known buildings in Westminster are national monuments associated with Church and State, which reflect Westminster's origins as a centre of royal, religious and political power. However, the majority of listed buildings in Westminster are terraced houses dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, usually laid out as part of planned estate developments in areas such as Mayfair, Belgravia, Pimlico and Marylebone. The range of historic building types includes gentlemen's clubs, learned societies, public houses, theatres, hotels, offices, arcades and department stores. There are a significant number of listed twentieth century buildings, and these range in character from underground stations to municipal housing estates. Many individual structures such as telephone boxes, lamp posts, fountains and statues are also listed.

1.3 The dense urban fabric of the city is enriched by a unique collection of historic parks and urban spaces. Foremost among the historic landscapes are The Royal Parks (St James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park, the majority of Regents Park and parts of Kensington Palace Gardens). The city contains around forty historic squares, many of which retain their original residential character, and which provide an important setting to many of the listed buildings. There are pioneering examples of formal urban

planning in the layout of Covent Garden Piazza and Regent Street and outstanding examples of early nineteenth century villa developments in Regent's Park and St John's Wood.



***Trafalgar Square. The City Council have initiated a co-ordinated approach to floodlighting the monuments and buildings in the square. Recent schemes include the floodlighting of the National Gallery and Nelson's Column (both listed Grade I).***

**Note:** References to publications in the text are printed in italics.

## **2. The City Council's policies relating to listed buildings**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Under Section 54A of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the City Council must determine applications for planning permission in accordance with the development plan (which will be the City Council's Unitary Development Plan when this is finally adopted), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However the Courts have accepted that Section 54A does not apply to decisions on applications for listed building consent. In many cases there is an overlap between listed building policies and development control policies, where for example both planning permission and listed building consent are required. The deposit Unitary Development Plan (UDP) therefore includes policies governing works of demolition or alteration which, while not in themselves development requiring planning permission, could affect the City Council's decision on a related application for planning permission. Some works, such as internal alterations, are not classed as development but require listed building consent. The City Council's policies governing these works have been excluded from the Unitary Development Plan and are contained in this document as supplementary listed building policies. The Unitary Development Plan policies which are of specific relevance to listed buildings are also set out below. A more detailed explanation of the

relationship between development control and listed building control can be found in PPG 15 (paragraphs 2.2-2.5).

## **2.2 Development control and listed building control**

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the City Council has a statutory duty as defined by section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Government advice is that there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings, except where a convincing case can be made out for alteration or demolition. The City Council will therefore endeavour to preserve listed buildings, their settings and those features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess.

## **2.3 Development plan policies**

### **Protection of listed buildings**

**DES 8(A)** To preserve buildings of special architectural or historic interest, their settings and features of special architectural or historic interest by using all its available powers.

**DES 8(B)** Proposals for total demolition or demolition behind the façade of a listed building will not normally be acceptable. Partial demolition will not normally be acceptable where it would adversely affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

### ***Uses of listed buildings***

**DES 8(C)** Proposals for the change of use of listed buildings which were purpose-designed for uses no longer required, will also be considered in the light of other policies in the Plan. The new and adapted use must not adversely affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building or of its setting. The implications of complying with other statutory requirements, e.g. fire escapes, will be taken into account in determining applications for change of use. If physical works will be necessary to accommodate a new use the City Council may refuse to consider planning applications for change of use without an associated listed building application.

### ***Works to listed buildings***

**DES 8(D)** All proposed works should be shown in an application and any matter that might be the subject of control under other legislation or by another authority should be resolved or be capable of resolution in a satisfactory manner. Where it is necessary to determine the manner in which work should be carried out, sensitive opening-up and limited investigation will be encouraged, providing it is carried out in consultation with the City Council.

**DES 8(E)** The Council will need to be satisfied that all aspects of proposals are necessary and that the overall effect of a proposal is not detrimental to the architectural or historic integrity or detailing of the building. Alterations should normally be entirely in accordance with the period, style and detailing of the

original building or with later alterations of architectural or historic interest. Wherever possible existing detailing and the contemporary features of the building should be preserved, repaired or, if missing, replaced. All works, whether they are repairs or alterations, will be required to be carried out in a correct scholarly manner, under proper supervision, by specialist labour where appropriate.

**DES 8(F)** Extensions to listed buildings will only be acceptable where they relate sensitively to the original building. Where the existing original roof structure is of specific architectural or historic interest, it should be preserved.

**DES 8(G)** The City Council will impose, as necessary conditions on planning permissions or listed building consents in order to govern any aspect of work to a listed building including any that is necessary for the protection of parts of the building not within the area of the permitted works. In order to be able to consider the grant of permission or consent the Council will require sufficient information to enable it to be sure that any works that might be permitted can be carried out without danger to the fabric and structure of the building and adjoining historic properties or buildings of character which may be affected by such works. Should, during the course of approved works, part of a building be found to be insecure or unstable or otherwise affected by the works, the City Council may require that such measures as may be necessary be taken in order to ensure the preservation of the building.

**DES 8(H)** In order to reduce the risk of theft of architectural features from historic buildings, the City Council may request additional security arrangements in order to safeguard those features while a building is empty or during building works.

### **Setting of listed buildings**

**DES 8(I)** Developments, which adversely affect the setting of a listed building or important views of a listed building will not normally be permitted.

## **2.4 Supplementary listed buildings policies**

### ***Internal alterations***

**SPG/HBI** Internal alterations should normally be entirely in accordance with the period, style and detailing of the original building or with later alterations of special architectural and historic interest.

Wherever possible existing detailing and the contemporary features of the building should be preserved, repaired or, if missing, replaced. All works, whether they be repairs or alterations, will be required to be carried out in a correct scholarly manner, under proper supervision, by specialist labour where appropriate.

The Council will need to be satisfied that alterations to listed buildings are justified, and that the overall effect of a proposal is not detrimental to the architectural or historic integrity or detailing of the interior.

## **Plan form**

**SPG/HB2** Where they are of special architectural or historic interest, the original plan forms of listed buildings should be preserved, or restored where appropriate, and their integrity should not be compromised. It will not normally be acceptable to make openings in the party wall between historic buildings where this would adversely affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

## **Repairs to listed buildings**

**SPG/HB3** The City Council encourages the proper repair and maintenance of the fabric and structure of historic buildings. Where listed building consent is necessary, consent will only be granted where works have been confined to the best possible method of rectifying any defect in the light of the statutory protection placed on the building.



*The figure of Eros forms part of the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain by Alfred Gilbert (1893) and is listed Grade I. The statue is an aluminium casting and has been repaired at various times in the past. In 1990 vandals damaged the statue and a crack appeared in the supporting leg. Eros was temporarily removed to allow a full analysis of its condition, including radiography, followed by structural and conservatorial repairs. The repairs raised a number of technical and philosophical issues, including the means of achieving a durable repair with minimum intervention. Fears that the statue would have to be removed to museum conditions have proved unfounded. The statue returned in 1994, and is now protected by video surveillance.*

## **3. The listing of buildings**

### **3.1 Legislative background**



The main legislation concerning listed buildings is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further government advice is contained in the planning policy guidance note 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG 15), which was issued in September 1994.

### **3.2 The statutory list**

The listing of buildings is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. 'Listed' buildings are buildings which are included in the Secretary of State's list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The City Council has copies of the list, which can be inspected at the Council's One Stop Services.

Listed buildings are graded, I, II\* and II. Grades I and II\* identify buildings of outstanding architectural or historic importance and account for about 10% of the total number of listed buildings in Westminster. The listing grade is clearly a material consideration in the exercise of listed building control. However, it is important to note that the statutory controls apply to all listed buildings, of whatever grade.

The City Council may recommend to the Secretary of State additions to the list as further buildings are recognised as being of special architectural or historic interest. A building preservation notice may be placed on a building if necessary, pending its addition to the list.

### **3.3 The extent of listing**

The list descriptions are intended mainly for identification purposes and are rarely a comprehensive record of all features of interest. They should not be relied upon to determine whether or not listed building consent is required for works to a listed building. It is important to note that the whole of the building, including its interior, is listed. Buildings that lie within the curtilage of a listed building, unless built after July 1948, are also subject to listed building control even if they are not specifically mentioned in the list description. In addition, objects fixed to the building may be considered to be part of the listed building (see paragraph 6.28 below).

*Department of National Heritage leaflet: 'What Listing Means', October 1994.*  
*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'The Listing of Historic Buildings', 1996.*

### **3.4 The effect of listing**

Once a building is listed, listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, or for the alteration or extension of the listed building in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. This applies to internal as well as external works. It is for the City Council to determine in each case whether consent is required, and whether the works constitute alteration or demolition.

Certain types of work do not normally require consent, for example internal redecoration, renewal of concealed services, routine repairs in matching materials and maintenance. More substantial repairs may require consent, depending on their extent and character. Further detailed guidance about when consent is required is given in section 6 below. In cases of doubt, the advice of the City Council should be sought in writing.



### 3.5 Enforcement

To carry out works affecting the special character of a listed building without consent is a criminal offence and can result in severe fines and even imprisonment. Works to listed buildings, therefore, should never be carried out without consent. Where alterations to a listed building have been carried out without consent and are found to be unacceptable, the City Council may either seek to prosecute those responsible or serve a listed building enforcement notice. Reports of unauthorised works to a listed building will normally result in a site visit by a Council officer within 24 hours of the report.



***67 Dean Street, Soho. Panelled interior to first floor room. The unauthorised removal of the original eighteenth century panelling in 1989 resulted in prosecution and a fine of £14,000. The panelling has since been fully reinstated.***

## 4. Applying for listed building consent

### 4.1 How to make an application

Applications for listed building consent are made to **Development Planning Services** of the Planning and City Development Department. Some works may also require planning permission or advertisement consent. Forms are obtainable from One Stop Services, or by telephoning the relevant area team. See contacts at the end of the guide and click on the box for details.

### 4.2 Application drawings

Applications should be supported by drawings showing clearly and accurately and to a metric scale, the existing building and the proposed alterations. In most cases plans, sections and elevations at a scale of 1:50 will suffice. These should be clearly annotated to show the extent of retention and/or removal of the

existing features and fabric of the building. Alterations to decorative features such as windows, doors, and railings usually require drawings at a scale such as 1:20 or even full size. Additionally, some works may best be described in a method statement, specification or schedule of works. The existing building, including any features of interest, should be clearly recorded. Good quality dated photographs of historic features, cross-referenced to drawings are helpful. These should always be included with proposals for major alterations or refurbishment.

#### **4.3 Supporting information**

Proposals for major refurbishment may need to be supported by a report on the history and development of the building. This should include any documentary evidence relating to the design, construction and development of the building, and any other relevant information such as evidence of later alterations and repairs. Schemes for alterations to listed buildings should be prepared by professionals with appropriate expertise. Applicants may be asked to justify their proposals, especially where a change of use or demolition is proposed. It may be necessary to provide clear and convincing evidence about the viability of existing and proposed uses or about technical and economic constraints on the use of a building.



***The Royal Institution, Albemarle Street, Mayfair. Listed Grade I. The street façade dates from 1838 and is finished in a Roman cement render applied to brickwork. This was extensively repaired in 1995, retaining as far as possible the original material, and painted in imitation of natural stone. The techniques of repair were based on a conservators report, and were developed in consultation with English Heritage.***

#### **4.4 Processing the application**

Applications will be dealt with by one of the City Council's design officers who have special expertise in historic building matters. They will be able to give advice regarding the need for consent, and may visit the building either before or after the application is made in order to assess whether the proposals are acceptable. English Heritage's professional staff should be consulted regarding all proposals relating to

grade I and II\* listed buildings, and proposals for significant works to grade II listed buildings or raising wider issues.

Applicants are advised to seek advice from officers of the Council and staff of English Heritage before making a formal application. Where an application is considered partially unsatisfactory the Council's case officer will normally contact the applicant or their agent to discuss revisions.

#### **4.5 Consultations**

The City Council will consult English Heritage, national and local amenity societies and other interested parties as appropriate. Applications for listed building consent may be advertised in the local newspaper, and may be the subject of a notice displayed outside the property. Applications relating to theatres and to public statues have special requirements for consultations. Further guidance to the procedures for dealing with listed building applications is set out in Annex B of PPG 15.

#### **4.6 Special procedures**

Certain categories of listed building, namely ecclesiastical buildings, crown buildings, diplomatic buildings and buildings owned by the City Council, are subject to special procedures. Ecclesiastical buildings of certain denominations are exempt from listed building control, where these are in use for ecclesiastical purposes. The extent of ecclesiastical exemption is defined in The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 1994, and further guidance is set out in Section 8 of PPG 15. The Crown is also currently exempt from listed building control. The current arrangements for crown exemption are set out in Circular 18/84; 'Crown Land and Crown Development'.

#### **4.7 The decision**

In the majority of cases a decision will be made between six and eight weeks after a valid application has been made. Delays may occur where insufficient information has been included with the application, or where negotiations are necessary to amend the proposals. A decision may be made either by officers under 'delegated powers', or by the Town Planning (Applications) Sub-Committee. English Heritage have powers of direction in respect of the granting of listed building consent. The City Council must therefore receive English Heritage authorisation before granting consent. English Heritage may also direct the imposition of conditions on listed buildings consents. In very exceptional cases the Secretary of State may require that the application be called in to him for decision.

If consent is granted it is likely to include conditions. These may require the submission of further information before work commences. All conditions should be read carefully and must be complied with. If consent is refused, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Secretary of State.

#### **4.8 Investigative works**

In some cases, opening up or other significant investigatory works may be justified in order to understand the construction and condition of the building before proposals can be finalised. Consideration should always be given to non-destructive techniques such as the use of fibre-optic tubes, and boroscopes.

Where these are not sufficient, the extent of opening up works should be clearly defined and agreed in advance with the City Council (see policy DES8 (D) above). Emergency repairs such as shoring should also be agreed in advance with the District Surveyor's Service and with officers of Development Planning Services.

*English Heritage leaflet: 'Investigative Work on Historic Buildings', 1994*

#### **4.9 Variations to approved schemes**

The City Council is frequently asked to approve variations to an approved scheme of works in the course of construction, for example where the extent of demolition or replacement works found necessary exceed the approved works. In all cases the actual variations proposed should be identified clearly on a drawing, and the City Council's view obtained in writing, before work is carried out on the relevant part of the scheme. In the case of very minor variations the City Council may decide that the variation is non-material. However, in all other cases a formal application for listed building consent will be required.

### **5. General Principles**

#### **5.1 Evaluation of listed buildings**

PPG 15 sets out the general criteria to be taken into account in considering all listed building consent applications:

- i) the importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms;
  
- ii) the particular physical features of the building (which may include its design, plan, materials or location) which justify its inclusion in the list: list descriptions may draw attention to features of particular interest or value, but they are not exhaustive and other features of importance (e.g. interiors) may come to light after the building's inclusion in the list;
  
- iii) the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene, which may be very important, e.g. where it forms an element in a group, park, garden or other townscape, or landscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby;
  
- iv) the extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).



***Crockers Folly Public House, Aberdeen Place, NW8. A lavishly constructed pub dating from c.1900, which retains a fine interior with original fittings. Listed Grade II\*.***

## **5.2 Uses for listed buildings**

The great majority of listed buildings must remain in economically viable use if they are to be maintained in the long term. The best use for a listed building is very often that for which it was originally designed where this continues to be viable. However, some buildings were purpose designed for uses that are no longer required and if left empty, neglect becomes a considerable danger.

In these circumstances, change of use of a building may be suitable, if it will result in the preservation of an historic building and if it can take place without considerable alteration or loss of character and is consistent with other policies of the development plan. PPG 15 states that 'in principle, the aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the historic building. This may not necessarily be the most profitable use if that would entail more destructive alterations than other viable uses'.

Further guidance is given in paragraphs 3.8-3.11 of PPG 15. The City Council's relevant policy is DES8 (C).

## **5.3 Demolition of listed buildings**

The general presumption is that all buildings on the statutory list will be preserved because of their architectural and/or historic interest. There may, however, be a few exceptional cases where consent for demolition, or part demolition, may be granted. PPG 15 contains detailed guidance regarding proposals for demolition of listed buildings (paras. 32.16-3.19). This states that consent for demolition would not be



given simply because redevelopment is economically more attractive to the developer than repair and reuse of a historic building, or because the developer acquired the building at a price that reflected the potential for redevelopment rather than the condition and constraints of the existing historic building. PPG 15 also sets out the criteria to be used by the City Council in assessing proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building. These considerations are first the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance, and to the value derived from continued use; second, the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use, and third the merits of alternative proposals for the site. The relevant City Council policy is DES 8(B).

Proposals involving demolition of any part of a listed building will be subject to consultation with the national amenity societies, as well as being referred to English Heritage. English Heritage must be notified of all proposals to demolish listed buildings, and allowed access to buildings which it wishes to record before demolition takes place.



***2 Manchester Square, W1. Grade II terrace house, now offices, dating from c.1776-88. The front elevation up to second floor level has recently been rebuilt following major structural movement. All decorative features including window joinery, stone door surround and slate balcony were carefully reinstated, and the new brickwork tuck pointed and colour toned to match the original work.***

#### **5.4 Alterations to listed buildings**

In general, works to listed buildings should retain historic fabric and features of architectural or historic interest in situ and repair all damaged historic fabric or features, rather than replace them. The City Council encourages the reinstatement of missing architectural features where there is clear evidence of their original appearance.

The exercise of listed building control must start with a professional assessment of the special architectural or historic interest of the building. In the majority of cases this will extend to the whole of the interior. In a few instances the special interest may be limited to the façade only. The City Council recognises that listed buildings vary greatly in the historic value of their interiors, and that the potential for alterations varies accordingly. However, the integrity of historic buildings can easily be undermined by piecemeal alteration. In sensitive interiors alterations may have to be restricted to a minimum.



PPG 15 emphasises the need for reasonable flexibility and imagination to be shown by all parties involved in alterations to listed buildings. Standard requirements for office floor loadings, air conditioning and space planning etc. should not be imposed at the expense of historic interiors. Equally, the City Council will apply its policies with reasonable flexibility where there is a convincing justification for proposed alterations.

When repair, alterations or extension works are justified, they must relate sensitively to the original building and will require craftsmanship and professional skill of a high standard. In almost all cases the materials used for alterations, extensions or repairs should match the original. The use of non-traditional materials will not normally be acceptable.

The City Council's policies with regard to works to listed buildings are DES 8(D), (E), (F) and (G) and SPG/HB1, HB2 and HB3. Detailed guidance regarding repairs and alterations to listed buildings is set out in Section 6 below.

*Christopher Brereton: 'The Repair of Historic Buildings: Advice on Principles and Methods', English Heritage 1991.*

*English Heritage leaflet: 'London Terrace Houses 1660-1860: A Guide to Alterations and Extensions', 1996.*

## **5.5 Maintenance and protection of listed buildings**

Regular maintenance is essential to the long-term preservation of listed buildings. Prompt action to remedy minor defects will prevent costly and disruptive repairs at a later stage. Routine maintenance is the responsibility of the owners of a listed building, and most owners undertake such works in a careful and responsible manner.

However, some listed buildings in Westminster suffer from neglect, especially where they are vacant and with no immediate prospect of a new use. The City Council monitors the condition of such buildings and co-operates with English Heritage in maintaining a register of 'buildings at risk'. If the necessary repairs are not carried out, then the City Council may intervene to ensure the preservation of a building either by issuing repairs notices, or in the case of a vacant building, by carrying out emergency repairs, and seeking reparation from the owner.

Grants may be available as resources permit from a number of sources, where special work or materials may be beyond the means of owners.

All buildings are at some risk of fire, theft or accidental damage. Buildings are at increased risk of fire when repair works are in progress, and those responsible for building works should ensure that contractors observe appropriate precautionary measures, for example by the issue of 'hot work permits' for tradesmen using flammable materials or incendiary tools. Precautions should be taken to avoid accidental damage to listed buildings during building works, for example by encasing ornamental features such as staircases and fireplaces.

The theft of architectural features is a particular problem with empty buildings, and owners are advised to take special precautions against such loss. Valuable architectural features should always be carefully recorded and insured for their full replacement value. The City Council's policy regarding theft of architectural features is DES 8(H). Owners are advised to carry enough insurance cover to meet their statutory and contractual responsibilities to reinstate and repair damage after fire, theft or other catastrophes.

*English Heritage: 'Buildings at Risk Register', published annually.*

*English Heritage/Eleanor Michell: 'Emergency Repairs for Historic Buildings', 1988.*

*English Heritage/RICS leaflet: 'Insuring Your Historic Building', 1994.*

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'Guidance about Architectural Theft.'*

*Fire Protection Association: 'Heritage Under Fire, A Guide to the Protection of Historic Buildings', 1995.*

### **5.6 Extensions to listed buildings**

Where extensions to listed buildings are proposed these should relate sensitively to the original building, and will be judged against policy DES 8(F) in the development plan. Proposals for roof extensions may be unacceptable where the form or fabric of the roof is of specific architectural or historic interest, and will also be judged against policy DES 6 in the development plan concerning roof extensions.

In some cases listed buildings are capable of being extended without damaging their character, subject to sensitive handling of scale and detail. In other cases extensions would detract from the uniformity of a formal group of buildings, or from the integrity of a particular design, and will therefore be unacceptable in principle. Many buildings in Westminster occupy very constricted sites, and extensions may be unacceptable where they would result in the loss of original gardens or yards.

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'Conservatories: A Guide to Design and Planning Procedures', 1994.*

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'Roofs, A Guide to Alterations and Extensions on Domestic Buildings', 1995.*



***25 Berkeley Square, Mayfair. Built as mansion flats c.1906 by F T Verity, now offices. Listed Grade II. The principal interest of this building lies in the façade design. The photograph shows the building after implementation of a major refurbishment scheme, including alterations behind the façade and an extension at roof level.***

### **5.7 The setting of listed buildings**

The setting of a listed building is often an essential part of the building's character, especially where it stands in its own garden or grounds, or where it forms part of a planned townscape. The City Council will pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings in considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent which affect listed buildings. The relevant policy is DES 8(l).

### **5.8 Modern listed buildings**

Many of the large commercial buildings in Westminster which date from the early decades of this century are steel-framed structures with masonry cladding. These include the substantial groups of buildings along Regent Street and the Aldwych which date from the period 1900-1935. Many of these are listed on account of their monumental townscape qualities, and the special interest of their interiors is often limited in extent. It can be advantageous to the owners and occupiers of these and other large commercial buildings to co-operate with the City Council and English Heritage to define in some detail the extent of the special interest of the building.

In recent years modern buildings, including post-1945 structures, have been added to the statutory list. These are extraordinarily diverse in their design and materials, and include a number of seminal modern movement designs such as the Penguin Pool at London Zoo (1934), the Time and Life Building in New Bond Street (1951-2) and the Economist building in St James Street (1960-4). These are inherently different from traditional masonry structures, and in some respects their conservation requires a different approach. Decisions about alterations to such buildings should always be based on a thorough understanding of the original design intentions.

*English Heritage leaflet: 'Developing Guidelines for the Management of Listed Buildings', 1995.*



*The Penguin Pool, London Zoo. Grade I listed structure dating from 1934 designed by Lubetkin and Tecton. Reinforced concrete structure with cantilevered interlocking spiral ramps. The repair of the pool has had to balance the need to improve weathering details while retaining the purity of the original design. Special provision has been made for future planned maintenance.*

## **6. Repairs and Alterations: Detailed Guidance**

**Note:** The guidance that follows is concerned principally with works which require listed building consent, and adapts the guidance set out in Annex C of PPG 15 to the particular circumstances of Westminster.

There is a great variety in the character, period and materials of buildings in Westminster, and the advice given will not be applicable to every situation that rises, particularly where buildings of modern design are concerned.

### **6.1 Roofs**

The form, structure and materials of historic roofs are almost always of interest, and the presumption will be in favour of their retention. The concealed roof of a traditional terraced house can be just as significant as a steeply pitched roof which is visible from the street.

Many original roofs on terraced houses in Westminster have been replaced by later mansard roofs. Where original roofs survive, including the 'm'-shaped or double pitched roof, these should normally be preserved. Later roofs may also be of special interest.



***Roofscape in Meard Street, Soho, showing early eighteenth century roof form clad in clay tiles. Note the renewed lead rainwater pipe and Portland stone copings in the foreground.***

Proposals for roof extensions will be judged against all relevant policies including DES 6 and DES 8F in the Unitary Development Plan.

*English Heritage leaflets: 'Dormer Windows'; 'Mansard Roofs'.*

*Georgian Group leaflet no. 10: 'Roofs'.*

*Westminster City Council leaflet;*

*'Roofs: A Guide to Alterations and Extensions on Domestic Buildings', 1995.'*

## **6.2 Roof coverings**

Original roofing materials such as natural Welsh slate, clay tile, lead and copper should be retained and repaired. Their replacement by modern substitute materials is normally unacceptable. Any decorative features such as cresting, decorated ridge or hip tiles, finials etc. should be retained and repaired as necessary. Roof ventilators may detract from the appearance of prominent roof slopes, and where they are necessary they should be located in the least obtrusive positions.

Leadwork to gutters, flat roofs, flashings and weatherings should be carefully specified in terms of its thickness, sheet size and jointing to ensure durability.

*Ashurst, John and Ashurst, Nicola, 'Practical Building Conservation', 1989, Vol. 4 'Metals'.*

*The Lead Sheet Association: 'The Lead Sheet Manual' (Three volumes).*

## **6.3 Chimney stacks**



Chimney stacks are important features which normally should be retained, even if no longer in use, particularly where they form part of the original structure or contribute to the roofscape.

Chimney pots should generally be retained in position and replaced where missing. Surviving eighteenth and nineteenth century pots can be of historic interest in their own right, and should be carefully retained and repaired.

#### **6.4. External decorative features**

Original decorative features (and later features which add to the architectural or historic interest of the building) should be retained. The City Council will encourage the reinstatement of missing architectural features, where there is clear evidence of their original appearance. Features such as porches, parapets, balconies, verandahs and architectural mouldings are important, and their original form should be respected. Carved details in stone or timber, moulded brickwork and terracotta, coade stone ornamentation, statuary, murals, mosaics, and ornamental ironwork should be retained. Where decorative features require repairs, these should be carried out by people with appropriate craft/conservatorial skills.

#### **6.5 Masonry**

The original facing materials with which a building was constructed should remain exposed. Recladding in general, the rendering of brickwork and the painting of brick, stone, terracotta or composite stone will not normally be permitted.



***Hinde Street Methodist Church, W1, 1881-7 by James Weir, listed Grade II. Front elevation, built in limestone and white brick, after cleaning and repair. All the repairs have been carried out by piecing in matching stone to heavily eroded areas. Stainless steel wires have been installed on ledges to deter pigeon roosting.***



Repairs to brickwork should accurately match the bond, colour, texture, dimensions and pointing of the original brickwork. Any features such as rubbed brick arches or decorative mouldings should be retained, and where necessary repaired or reinstated.

*Ashurst, John and Ashurst, Nicola, 'Practical Building Conservation', 1989, (Vol. 1: Stone Masonry; Vol. 2, Chapter 5: The repair and maintenance of brickwork).*

*Ashurst, John and Dimes, Francis G., 'Conservation of Building and Decorative Stones', Butterworth-Heinemann, London 1990.*

*Georgian Group leaflets no 2: 'Brickwork'; no 12: 'Stonework'.*

## **6.6 Terracotta**

The cleaning and repair of terracotta requires specialist skills, and it is advisable to carry out thorough research and consultation before carrying out such works. Inappropriate cleaning methods can easily damage the surface fire-skin. Where terracotta blocks have to be renewed, these should normally be replaced with new material to match the original. Replacement with reconstituted stone or GRP would require listed building consent, and this would not normally be viewed favourably.

*Ashurst, John and Ashurst, Nicola, 'Practical Building Conservation', 1989, (Vol. 2, Chapter 6: Repair and maintenance of terracotta and faience).*

*Taylor, Jonathan, 'Victorian and Edwardian Terracotta Buildings', article in *The Building Conservation Directory* 1995, pp. 53-56.*



***Terracotta façade produced by Burmantofts to designs by Alfred Waterhouse (1889-91). Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, Duke Street, Mayfair, formerly King's Weigh House Chapel. Listed Grade II\*.***

## **6.7 Stucco and render**

Existing stucco or render should not be stripped off to expose brick or stone where these were never historically exposed. Many buildings in Westminster are finished in stucco or Roman cement renders. These exhibit smooth surfaces, sharp angles, and mock joints in imitation of stone ashlar, and are

generally enriched by architectural mouldings run or cast in plaster. Repairs or alterations to such materials should retain as much as possible of the original fabric, and should faithfully reproduce the form, texture and materials of the original work.



**Manchester Street, W1. Stucco details around fanlight on a replicated façade.**

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'Stucco: It's Care and Maintenance', 1995.*

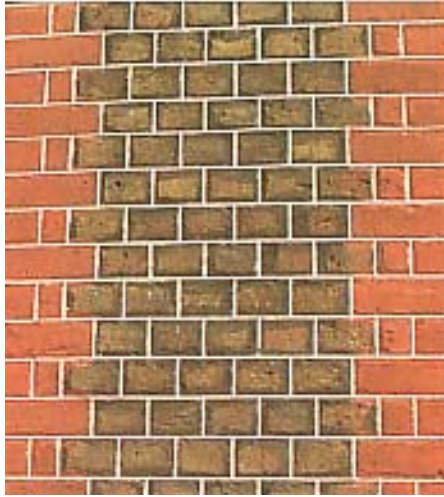
*Georgian Group Leaflet No 5: 'Render, Stucco and Plaster'.*

### **6.8 Pointing**

Repointing with hard cement-based mortars is one of the principal causes of decay in historic masonry and can cause irreversible damage to the appearance of external wall surfaces. Cement-based mortars and renders are less porous than those made with lime, and can trap moisture in the wall or drive it elsewhere, thereby accelerating decay.

Repair mortars and renders should normally be based on the mix and appearance of the original work. Traditional mortars were almost always based on lime which had been slaked to a putty. These mortars are more porous than modern cement-based mortars, but can be equally durable. The choice of aggregate is critical in achieving a suitable mortar.

The City Council may require details of proposed mortar mixes to ensure that they are appropriate for the circumstances. Sample panels of pointing work may also be necessary to establish an agreed standard of work. Any change in the character of the existing pointing may require listed building consent.



***New tuck pointing on an early eighteenth century brick façade (68 Dean Street).***



***Careless pointing with strong cement mortar has caused irreversible damage to this eighteenth century brick façade (38 Upper Brook Street).***

Where historic pointing survives, this should be preserved. Repointing should be restricted to those areas where the existing pointing is substantially decayed. The old mortar should be carefully cut out with hand tools as the use of mechanical cutters or disc grinders can be highly damaging. The repair of tuck pointing, which is sometimes found in Westminster, requires specialist craft skills.

*English Heritage leaflet: 'The Pointing of Brickwork', 1994.*

*S.P.A.B. Technical Pamphlet No. 5: 'Pointing Stone and Brick Walling', Information Sheet No. 8: 'Tuck Pointing in Practice; Information sheet No. 9: 'An Introduction to Building Limes'.*

*Victorian Society leaflet No. 7: 'Brickwork'.*

### **6.9 External painting**

Painting the outside of a listed building requires consent where this affects the special architectural or historic character of the building. Previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted over. In formal compositions such as squares and terraces the careful specification of paint type and colour is often essential to maintain the unity of the whole.

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 4: 'Paint Colour'.*

### **6.10 External Cleaning**

Masonry surfaces can easily be damaged by inappropriate cleaning, and in many cases it is best to leave them undisturbed. External cleaning of buildings with low-pressure intermittent water sprays and bristle brushes does not normally require listed building consent. However, cleaning with water can lead to saturation of the walls and outbreaks of dry rot in built-in timbers. Other methods of cleaning stone or brickwork may be appropriate but can have a marked effect on the character of the building and will generally require listed building consent. The City Council therefore requires that cleaning methods are carefully specified and appropriate for the circumstances. Where proprietary methods are to be used a method statement should be submitted for approval. Cleaning should only be carried out by specialist firms and under close supervision, and it is advisable to employ an independent stone cleaning consultant to specify and supervise such works.

*Ashurst, Nicola, 'Cleaning Historic Buildings', Vol I and II, Donhead Publishing, 1994.*

*S.P.A.B Technical Pamphlet No. 4 'Cleaning Stone and Brick'.*

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'Façade Cleaning', 1995.*



***24 Upper Brook Street, Mayfair. The brickwork has been gently cleaned to remove a layer of paint, but without damaging the earlier tuck pointing. New lead flashings and weatherings have been carefully inserted.***





*Entrance to 1760's townhouse. Wood doorcase of engaged Doric columns, panelled door and sidelights with fanlight over (11 Queen Anne Street, W1)*

*Early eighteenth century sash windows (Barton Street, SW1)*

*Early eighteenth century sash  
windows (Barton Street, SW1)*

*Meta-Georgian sash windows Portland  
stone facade. Replaced by brick Guild  
(Burlington House, SW1)*

### **6.11 Door and window openings**

Door and window openings should retain their original size, proportions and detailing, including historic cill and lintel details. The depth to which window frames are set back from the face of the building is a significant historical feature which should be maintained.

### **6.12 External doors**

Original and historic doors should be retained, together with any associated features such as doorcases, surrounds, fanlights and door furniture. Doorways which become redundant should be maintained as dummy doors where they contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Where historic doors are beyond repair they should be carefully reproduced to match the original design, re-using

the original mouldings and decorative features if possible. Modern mass-produced doors are almost always inappropriate, and painted doors should not be replaced with stained or varnished doors.

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 3: 'Doors'.*

*Victorian Society leaflet No. 1: 'Doors'.*

### **6.13 Windows**

Original and historic windows should be retained, or where beyond repair, they should be replaced with purpose-made copies. These should accurately match the dimensions, details, materials and finish of the original windows. The introduction of standardised modern windows, especially those made of aluminium, steel or UPVC, can be highly damaging to the appearance of historic buildings, and will almost always be unacceptable.

Many twentieth century buildings were designed with mild steel windows, and these too should be retained or replaced in facsimile where they contribute to the character of a building.

It is often proposed to replace existing windows in order to return to a more consistent or historic window pattern. Such proposals will be judged according to the historic value and condition of the existing windows, the evidence for the preferred pattern, and the desirability of achieving a uniform pattern e.g. in formal terraces.

Decorative elements associated with window such as shutters, blinds, hoods and cill-guards should be retained and repaired. Historic glass, whether decorative or plain, should be retained, and carefully protected from damage during building works.

The installation of double glazed units is usually incompatible with the retention of historic windows types due to the thicker glazing bars required. Secondary glazing is more likely to be acceptable, although this too may be damaging to the fabric and appearance of high-quality interiors. Listed building consent for such work will only be granted where these can be carried out without damaging the external appearance of the building or the integrity of historic interiors. The addition of sheets of film to glass for security or solar protection may also require consent.

*English Heritage leaflet: 'Sash Windows', 1994.*

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 1: 'Windows'.*

*S.P.A.B: Technical Pamphlet No. 13: 'The Repair of Wood Windows'.*

### **6.14 Shopfronts**

The City of Westminster contains many fine shopfronts dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and these should always be carefully preserved.

Proposals to replace modern shopfronts with a more historic style of shopfront will be judged according to the quality of the existing shopfront and the evidence for the preferred pattern.





**17/18 Sale Place, W2. Reinstated stucco shopfront in early nineteenth century terrace, listed Grade II. The buildings were in a semi-derelict state for some ten years prior to restoration in 1994/5. The restoration of the shopfront was financially assisted by the City Council.**

Proposals for the introduction of security measures will be judged according to their impact on the appearance of the shopfront, and on the architectural or historic character of the building. Solid metal shutters are almost always unacceptable. The use of security glass and/or internal brick-bond grilles are more likely to be acceptable.

Alterations to listed shopfronts usually require planning permission as well as listed building consent. In many cases signs will require advertisement consent in addition to listed building consent.

*English Heritage leaflet: 'Shopfronts'.*

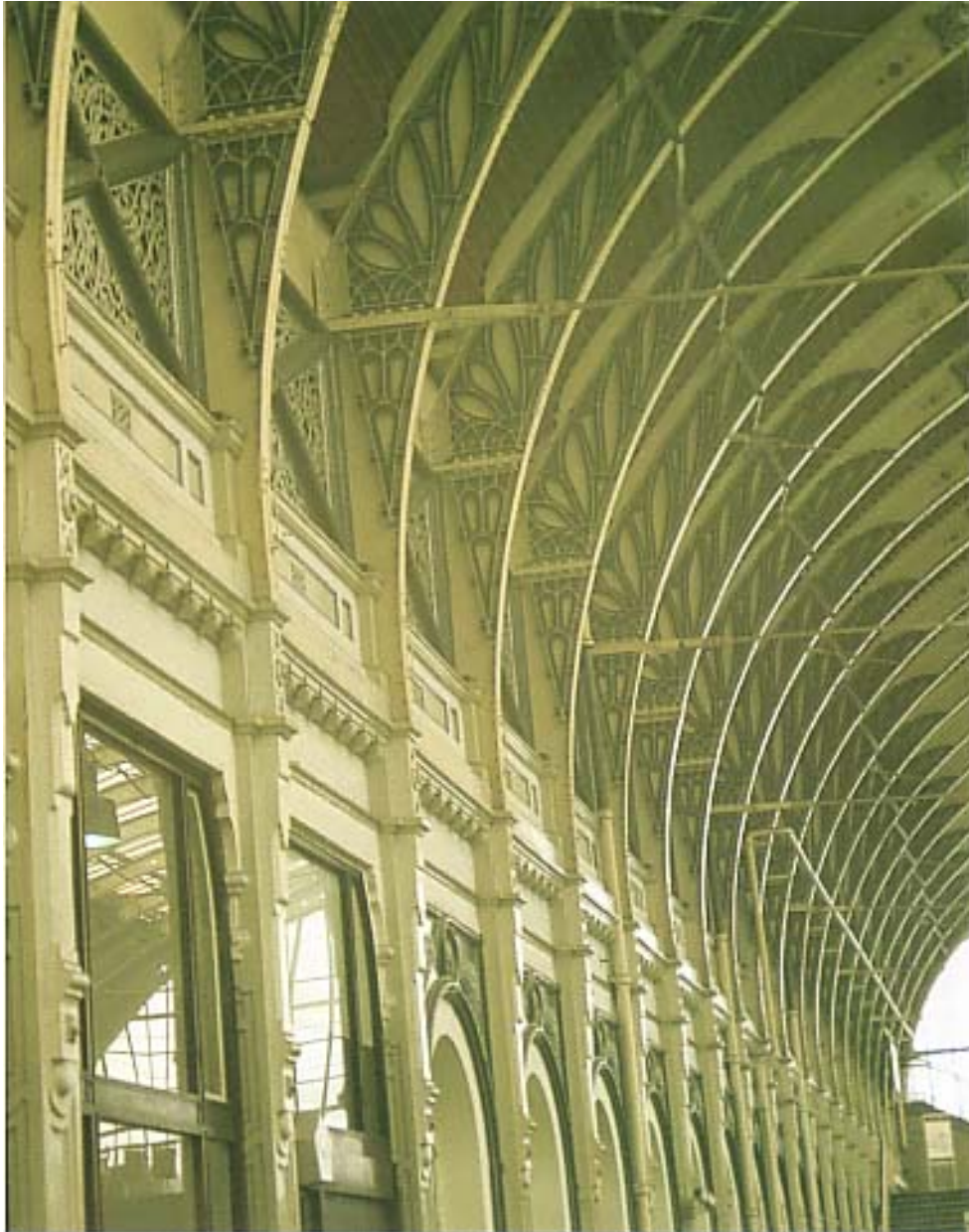
*Westminster City Council leaflets: 'Shopfronts, Blinds, and Signs', 'Advertisement Design Guidelines', 'Design Guidelines on Shopfront Security'.*

### **6.15 Paved Areas**

Areas of historic paving, such as York and Purbeck stone flags, should be carefully repaired. They have a patina of age which can easily be destroyed by thoughtless replacement. Natural stone steps, pavings and kerbs should not be replaced by artificial substitutes or by inappropriate alternatives such as imported marble tiling.

Front areas are a characteristic feature of terraced properties in Westminster, and proposals for infilling them will normally be resisted. Where they have been paved over in the past, proposals to re-open them will normally be welcomed, provided that suitably designed railings are reinstated.

*English Heritage leaflet: 'Street Improvements in Historic Areas', 1993.*



***Paddington Station. Repairs and restoration of ironwork to Brunel's train shed (listed Grade I).***

### **6.16 Ironwork**

Many listed buildings in Westminster are enlivened by the use of wrought iron or cast iron for items such as railings, balconies, lamp brackets and coalhole covers. These features should be retained and regularly maintained. The repair of ironwork is always preferable to replacement, but requires specialist advice and skills.

Where replacement of ironwork is necessary, great care should be taken to ensure that the new work accurately replicates the original in all details. This normally requires careful measurement and survey of the existing work, the preparation of clear working drawings, and accurate specification of the techniques, materials and finishes to be used.

*Ashurst, John and Ashurst, Nicola, 'Practical Building Conservation', 1989, Vol. 4 'Metals' (pp.13-40: The repair and maintenance of cast-iron and wrought iron)*

*English Heritage leaflet: 'Ornamental Ironwork: Gates and Railings', 1993.*

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 8: 'Ironwork'.*

*Victoria Society leaflet No. 6: 'Cast Iron.'*

### **6.17 External services and fittings**

Pipes, ducts and cables should always be carefully routed and located in the least obtrusive locations. Roof plant should be avoided if at all possible, but where it is necessary, it may be possible to sensitively locate it within the envelope of the building. If not, it must be concealed in views from ground level, and screened where appropriate.

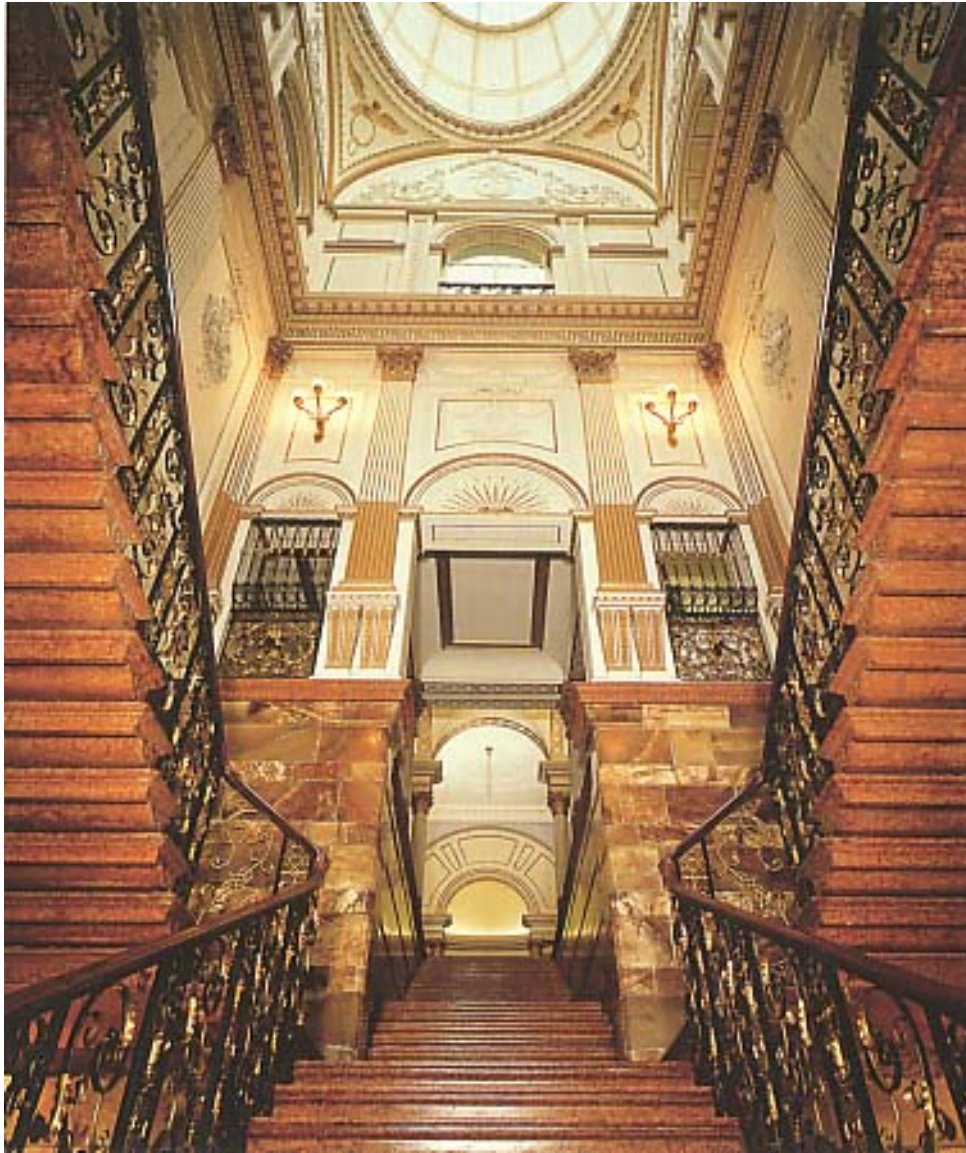
External services or fittings will require listed building consent where they affect the character of a listed building. These include satellite dishes, burglar alarms, meter boxes, security cameras, light fittings, flues and trunking. The City Council will need to be satisfied that such additions are necessary, and have been designed and located to minimise their impact. Where such proposals are considered to harm the appearance or character of a listed building, consent will be refused.

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'A Guide to the Siting of Security Cameras', 1995.*

### **6.18 Interiors**

Consent must be obtained for all internal alterations which affect the special architectural or historic character of a listed building, whatever the grade. All proposals will be judged against policy SPG/HB1. Proposals for the refurbishment of listed buildings should be supported by drawings which clearly identify all features of interest, and confirm their retention. Such features may include chimney pieces, plasterwork, panelling, doors and door surrounds, staircases and balustrades. These should always be fully protected from damage during the course of any works on site.





***This exceptionally fine interior was recently refurbished as part of a large office development. This included the careful cleaning of marble, stone and decorative finishes. The house dates from the 1760s, but the grand staircase is an interesting later addition of c. 1904 (3 Grafton Street, Mayfair. Listed Grade I).***

### **6.19 Plan form**

The plan form of a listed building is usually of great importance. It provides evidence of how a building was used and its radical alteration will almost always destroy significant elements of historic fabric. Even comparatively minor alterations such as the introduction of new internal doors can affect the special character of an interior. As stated in paragraph 5.4 above, the potential for alteration will vary according to the historic value of the building and its interiors.

In general, new openings in the party walls between listed buildings should be avoided. It will not normally be acceptable to form openings in the party walls on the ground and first floors walls or in other sensitive

locations. There may, however, be more flexibility in areas of secondary importance or where the interiors are not of special interest.

All proposals to alter the plan form of listed buildings will be judged against policy SPG/HB2.

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 15: 'The Georgian Townhouse Form and Function'.*

### **6.20 Room proportions**

The size and shape of rooms are fundamental characteristics of listed buildings. The sub-division of rooms, the introduction of fire lobbies and the installation of suspended ceilings or raised floors should be avoided where a room is of architectural or historic interest.

### **6.21 Partitions**

Original lath and plaster partitions are an important element in historic interiors and should normally be retained. They may also be important structurally and they should not be altered without a full understanding of their significance in the structure of the building. New partitions, if acceptable, should be scribed around any ornamental mouldings.

The removal or installation of office partitions in modern interiors or in modern extensions to listed buildings will in many cases have no effect on the special architectural or historic character of the building. However, such works should always be identified clearly on a drawing and the City Council's view obtained in writing to ascertain whether consent is required.

### **6.22 Service spaces and domestic offices**

In general, service spaces are of less interest than principal rooms and more flexibility in terms of alterations will be permitted. On occasion, however, they survive with original fittings intact and every effort should be made to preserve them. Large houses may contain fitted pantries, larders, wine bins, silver safes and so on. If there is a good rate of survival of these features or if they are particularly elaborate, they should be retained. In addition, individual items, such as kitchen ranges, dressers and stone sinks frequently survive. Where they are of special interest they should also be retained.

### **6.23 Staircases**

Staircases are frequently the most important feature of an interior, and their form, position and detailing should always be respected. The extension or relocation of historic staircases will in most cases be unacceptable. Secondary staircases may also be of interest and should normally be retained.

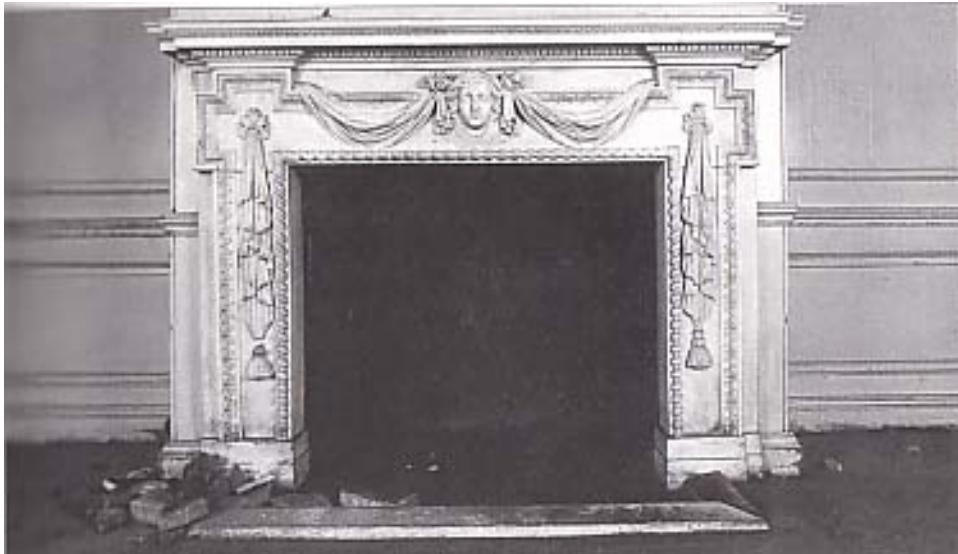
Cantilevered stone staircases are a feature of the higher class of terraced house, and their repair calls for specialist skills.

### **6.24 Chimneypieces**

The fireplace is frequently the visual focus of a room and should always be retained. Chimneypieces vary from the extremely lavish to the very modest. Both, in their own way, are important. Chimneypieces may

also have historic grates and firebacks. These should be retained. Even if the chimneybreast is missing, the chimneybreast is an important feature and should not be removed.

Historic chimneypieces are particularly vulnerable to theft. The City Council recommends that they should be photographed, measured, adequately insured and protected from theft or accidental damage during building works. If historic chimneypieces are removed or stolen from listed buildings the City Council will insist on their replacement with facsimile reproductions or suitable historic replacements of proven legitimate provenance.



***Eighteenth century marble fireplace - items such as this are targets for professional thieves and require stringent security.***

*English Heritage leaflet: "Theft of Architectural Features".*

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 3: 'Fireplaces'.*

*Victorian Society leaflet No. 3: 'Fireplaces.'*

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'Guidance about Architectural Theft'*

### **6.25 Plasterwork**

Decorative cornices, ceilings and wall decorations should be retained in situ. In some cases, where they are badly damaged, they may be replaced in facsimile, but an approximate copy will not be acceptable. Plain mouldings can also be important and should not be removed or altered without good reason. Where removal is unavoidable, they should generally be replaced in facsimile.

Plain plasterwork to ceilings and walls should not be stripped out. It is frequently capable of an indefinitely extended life, and unless it is damaged, it should be retained. Original lime plaster should be repaired using matching materials.

*Ashurst, John and Ashurst, Nicola, 'Practical Building Conservation', 1989, Vol. 3 'Mortars, Plasters and Renders'.*

*Victoria Society leaflet No. 4: 'Interior Mouldings'.*

### **6.26 Joinery**

Original panelling, doors, window shutters, window and door architraves, skirting boards, dados and picture rails should be retained, or if missing, reinstated. Historic shelving, cupboards, bed recesses or linen stores should also be retained where these are of importance.

*English Heritage leaflet 'Georgian Joinery, 1660-1840.'*

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 7: 'Mouldings'*

*Victorian Society leaflet No. 4: 'Interior Mouldings'.*

### **6.27 Floor finishes**

Historic floor finishes such as marble, stone flags and old boarded floors, especially early wide oak or elm boards, should be maintained and repaired. Where new floor boards are needed they should match the width, thickness and materials of the original boards. The lifting and relaying of stone flagged floors can be highly damaging to the historic appearance of old floors. Where this cannot be avoided the original floor should be carefully recorded before work commences, and relaid to the original pattern.





**Wide timber floorboards  
(68 Dean Street, Soho)**

*Georgian Group leaflet No. 11: 'Floors'.*

*S.P.A.B Information Sheet No. 10: 'Patching Old Floorboards.'*

### **6.28 Fixtures and fittings**

Any object or structure which is fixed to a listed building is treated as part of the listed building and normally cannot be removed without consent. Examples may include door and window furniture, servant bells, chimneypieces and grates, paintings set in integral panelling or decorative ceilings and sculpture (fixed or resting under its own weight) or fixed furniture which forms part of the decorative ensemble. In all cases, if these fixtures and fittings contribute to the architectural or historic interest of the building, they should be retained.

*Victorian Society Report: 'Coming Unstuck: The Removal of Fixtures From Listed Buildings', 1993.*

### **6.29 Interior decorative finishes**

In general, the City Council does not control the internal painting of listed buildings. However, where wall/ceiling paintings or important original decorative schemes survive, these should be preserved. In addition, interiors with elaborate plasterwork or other decoration will greatly benefit from appropriate painted treatment. Analysis of the accumulated layers of paint finishes can reveal valuable evidence regarding the history of an interior. Stripping of historic painted surfaces may therefore be undesirable.

*Georgian Group leaflets No. 6: 'Wallpaper', No. 14: 'Curtains and Blinds'.*

*Victorian Society leaflets: No. 2: 'Decorative Tiles'; No. 5: 'Wall Coverings'.*

*S.P.A.B. Information Sheet No. 5: 'Removing Paint from Old Buildings.'*

*Rosoman, Treve 'London Wallpapers: Their Manufacture and Use 1690 - 1840', English Heritage, 1992.*



***24 Upper Brook Street, Mayfair. This domestic interior has been adapted for office use, and incorporates secondary glazing, air-conditioning and floor trunking. The character of the room has been respected, and the original decorative features retained and, where necessary, reinstated. The fireplace has been adapted to extract air, while warmed air is introduced from purpose-designed units below the windows.***

### **6.30 Internal services**

The installation of concealed services generally does not require consent, provided that the historic fabric of the building is not damaged or the structure altered. The installation of visible service fittings such as radiators, smoke detectors, alarm panels, security devices and ventilation grilles will require consent where these affect the special character of historic interiors, and in significant interiors particular care should be exercised in the design and siting of such fittings.

New services such as air conditioning, extract ducting, computer trunking, and heating systems, must be carefully designed to minimise their impact on the fabric and appearance of historic interiors. This is often achieved by using non-conventional solutions. Suspended ceilings concealing air conditioning ducts, for example, will not normally be acceptable in historic interiors. The installation of air-conditioning in a historic building may be acceptable if the necessary pipework or trunking, the external cooling equipment and internal units can be sensitively integrated with the building. Such installations should be clearly specified and described as part of any application for refurbishment, so that their appearance and impact can be fully understood.

Proposals for the introduction of new kitchens, bathrooms and lavatories should show clearly the routing of all sanitary pipework, and should demonstrate that new pipework can be introduced without damaging historic interiors.

The introduction of passenger or goods lifts can be highly disruptive to the fabric and plan form of historic interiors. In such cases consent may be refused.

*Georgain Group leaflet No. 13: 'Lighting'.*

*S.P.A.B Technical Pamphlet No. 9: 'Electrical Installations in Old Buildings'.*

### **6.31 Fire protection and sound proofing**

The City Council's responsibilities under the Building Regulations are dealt with by the **District Surveyors' Service** they are located in two area offices. See contacts at the end of this guide for details.:

In exercising its responsibilities under the Building Regulations, the City Council will deal sympathetically with proposals for the restoration or conversion of historic buildings. In some cases the strict application of the Building Regulations may be incompatible with the sensitive repair or adaptation of a listed building. For example, the introduction of fire lobbies to protect the principle staircase in a listed building would in many cases harm the character of the interior. In such cases a joint site visit or meeting may be necessary attended by the District Surveyor, a City Council design officer and, where appropriate, by representatives of English Heritage and the London Fire Brigade.

The City Council will seek a solution which provides a building which is safe and tolerable to use, and which retains its historical and architectural character.

Works should be carried out sensitively, and should relate sympathetically to the historic character of the building. The City Council may ask for detailed drawings to show, for example how doors are to be upgraded for fire protection, or how floors are to be upgraded for sound insulation.

Applicants are advised to check that their proposals conform to the requirements of the building regulations and environmental health regulations, so that any difficulties can be identified and resolved at an early stage. Failure to do so may result in costly delays.

### **6.32 Access**

The City Council recognises the importance of dignified easy access for people with disabilities to and within historic buildings. Applicants may be required to address accessibility issues in planning applications affecting existing buildings, including buildings that are listed. Many listed buildings in Westminster are approached from the pavement by steps across a basement area, which make a level access impractical. However, in many cases improved access can be provided without harming the historic or architectural character of the building, for example by careful positioning of handrails. In those cases where there is conflict, professional skill and judgement are essential to assess the relative

importance of access in an historic building. Such decisions must take into account the degree of historic importance of the building, both in its design and fabric, relative to the benefit of the improved access.



***The Wallace Collection,  
Manchester Square, W1. The  
entrance to the galleries has  
been sensitively adapted to  
facilitate wheelchair access.***

*City of Westminster leaflet: 'Access for All', 1995.*

*English Heritage: 'Easy Access to Historic Properties', 1995.*

### **6.33 Structural alterations**

The City Council will generally expect to see the original structure of any listed building preserved and will not necessarily accept that minor defects are a justification for major reconstruction works. Alterations which affect the historic structure of a listed building require consent, even where these are not visible. The original structure of floors and roofs are often of considerable interest and should normally be maintained and repaired. Poorly considered structural works can lead to the partial or total collapse of listed buildings, and where major alterations are necessary the City Council may ask for a method statement to ensure that the techniques used and the sequence of works are appropriate. The relevant policy is DES8 (G).

Proposals for structural alterations to listed buildings, such as underpinning, rebuilding, floor strengthening and replacement of structural members, should always be supported by a detailed assessment of the problem by a suitably experienced engineer. The City Council may ask for supporting evidence in the form of level surveys, plumb surveys, annotated drawings showing crack patterns and historical information. Where the City Council is in doubt about the appropriateness of such proposals it may call on the advice of specialist consulting engineers.

*Westminster City Council leaflet: 'The Protection of Historic Buildings in Westminster, A Guide to Structural Alterations'.*

### **6.34 Floor strengthening**

The City Council frequently receives applications to strengthen floors where buildings designed for domestic use are now used as offices. Such proposals are frequently damaging to the architectural and

structural integrity of an historic building, and loading standards which are appropriate for new buildings should not be applied inflexibly to existing structures. Where strengthening works are justified, preference should be given to solutions which retain as much of the existing fabric as possible, and which employ traditional materials and techniques.

*Ashurst, John and Ashurst, Nicola, 'Practical Building Conservation', Vol. 5 (Chapter 1: Structural and decorative wood in building), 1989.*

*English Heritage: 'Office Floor Loadings in Historic Buildings', 1994.*

*S.P.A.B. Technical Pamphlet No. 2: 'Strengthening Timber Floors'.*

### **6.35 Damp and timber decay**

Regular maintenance is the key to the long-term survival of historic building fabric. Failure to prevent water ingress including leaks from gutters, downpipes and internal services, and poor ventilation of hidden voids can lead to the presence of dry rot. Proposals for dry rot eradication should always be discussed with the City Council and in some cases may require listed building consent. Wholesale stripping out of the affected areas combined with the intensive use of chemical fungicides can be highly damaging to historic interiors, and may not be effective in the long term. Consideration should always be given to the root causes of the problem, such as poor maintenance, and the need for future monitoring.

*S.P.A.B. Technical Pamphlet No. 8: 'The Control of Damp in Old Buildings.'*

*S.P.A.B. Information Sheet No. 4: 'The Need for Old Buildings to Breathe.'*

### **Contacts**

CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO  
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL  
CONTACTS LIST

## **Appendix One**

### *Relevant publications*

**Note:** In recent years many publications have been produced which contain detailed advice and information about historic buildings and their repair. References to explanatory leaflets on particular topics have been included in the text above, and publications which contain more general information or guidance are listed below.

#### **A. Historic buildings in Westminster**

Cruickshank, Dan and Burton, Neil,

**'Life in The Georgian City',**

Viking 1990.

Cruickshank, Dan and Wyld, Peter,

**'Georgian Town Houses and Their Details',**

Butterworth 1990.

Hobhouse, Hermione and Saunders,

Ann, (Editors), **'Good and Proper Materials :**

**The Fabric of London Since The Great Fire',**

Published by RCHME in association with the  
London Topographical Society, publication No. 140, 1989.

Pevsner, Nikolaus (Founding editor),

**'The Building of England',** Penguin:

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**Note:** A comprehensive technical bibliography is included in Ashurst (op.cit.),  
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## **Appendix Two**

### *Relevant organisations*

**Note:** A more detailed list of organisations is included in PPG 15 and in the Building Conservation Directory (published annually by Cathedral Communications Ltd).

A comprehensive list of organisations is contained in 'The Conservation Sourcebook' (HMSO, 1991) produced by the Conservation Unit of the Museums and Galleries Commission.

### **The Ancient Monuments Society,**

St. Ann's Vestry Hall

2 Church Entry

London EC4V 5HB

Tel: **(020) 7236 3934** Fax: **(020) 7329 3677**

**[www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk](http://www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk)**

### **The Council for British Archaeology**

Bowes Morrell House

111 Walmgate

York YO1 9WA

Tel: **01904 671417** Fax: **01904 671384**

**[www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)**

### **Department of Culture, Media and Sport (Listing Branch)**

2-4 Cockspur Street

London SW1Y 5DH

Tel: **(020) 7211 2361** Fax: **(020) 7211 2389**

**[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)**

### **English Heritage**

#### **London Region**

23 Savile Row

London W1X 1AB

Tel: **(020) 7973 3000** Fax: **(020) 7973 3792**

**[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)**

### **The Georgian Group**

6 Fitzroy Square

London W1T 5DX

Tel. **(020) 7529 8920** Fax: **(020) 7529 8939**

**[www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)**

**The Royal Institute of British Architects**

66 Portland Place

London W1N 4AD

Tel: **(020) 7580 5533** Fax: **(020) 7255 1541**

**www.architecture.com**

**The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors**

12 Great George Street

Parliament Square

London SW1P

Tel: **(020) 7222 7000** Fax: **(020) 7222 9430**

**www.rics.org.uk**

**The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings**

37 Spital Square

London E1 6DY

Tel: **(020) 7377 1644** Fax: **(020) 7247 5296**

**www.spab.org.uk**

**Survey of London (English Heritage)**

23 Savile Row

London W1X 1AB

Tel: **(020) 7973 3638** Fax: **(020) 7973 3287**

**The Twentieth Century Society**

70 Cowcross Street

London EC1M 6EJ

Tel: **(020) 7250 3857** Fax: **(020) 7251 8985**

**www.c2society.org.uk**

**The Victorian Society**

1 Priory Gardens

Bedford Park

London W4 1TT

Tel: **(020) 8994 1019** Fax: **(020) 8747 5899**

**www.victorian-society.org.uk**