

Listed Buildings

Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance

Adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan, 1999
Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011 Revised Deposit Draft

December 2004

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Celia Carrington
Director of Environment and Property
Swindon Borough Council
Premier House
Station Road
Swindon
SN1 1TZ

Copies of the document (priced £1.00 excl. p&p) can be obtained from:

Forward Planning
Environment and Property Department
Swindon Borough Council
Premier House
Station Road
Swindon
SN1 1TZ

(01793) 466513

Introduction

- 0.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning in the Historic Environment”, published by the Government in September 1994, states how important the protection of historic buildings is to the nation’s cultural heritage and national identity. These buildings contribute an irreplaceable record of the past, adding to the quality of modern life. Consequently, inappropriate development; extensions; alterations; or repairs to both internal and external features of listed buildings, can harm their architectural value.
- 0.2 Policy ENV2 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan, 2011 is the main planning policy tool to control alterations to listed buildings.
- 0.3 The policy contains four criteria which seek to ensure that collectively the architectural integrity and setting of any listed building is retained, during any alteration or repair, including works within the curtilage of a listed building, which may affect its setting. To ensure these criteria can be satisfied, there is a requirement placed upon the Council to state in more detail the design principles which it considers appropriate to follow.
- 0.4 To satisfy this requirement, the Council has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on listed buildings. This is in accordance with the previous Swindon Borough Local Plan (2001) Inquiry Inspector’s recommendation E17.2, which clearly states that any further advice on the treatment of listed buildings where development is not involved, should be given in supplementary planning guidance. This recommendation has subsequently been accepted by the Council.
- 0.5 This guidance focuses primarily upon works affecting listed buildings where development is not involved, for example: general principles on the repair and alteration of listed buildings; the use of appropriate materials’ detailed design

of individual features; and provide general information concerning the listing of buildings and listed building consent.

- 0.6 In addition, advice is given upon the general principles, size and style of extensions to listed buildings, which are subject to the same design principles.
- 0.7 The format of the Supplementary Planning Guidance is based upon the principle of having “guidance notes” for individual design elements concerning listed buildings, which will collectively provide a reference point for any works which may affect the physical fabric of a listed building. Initially these guidance notes will focus on general design principles, size and style, which should be addressed before commencing any works, followed by further more detailed guidance notes covering individual features, such as extensions, windows and doors.
- 0.8 For further detailed advice concerning the treatment of listed buildings, please contact the Council’s Conservation Architect at the address below, or telephone (01793) 466326.

Contacts

Forward Planning

Local Policy Team

Telephone: (01793) 466445

Fax: (01793) 466442

Development Services

Design, Conservation & Development Group

Conservation Architect

Telephone: (01793) 466326/466327

Development Management Group

DC North, Telephone: (01793) 466290

DC South, Telephone: (01793) 466294

Fax: (01793) 466459

Address

Environment and Property Department
Premier House
Station Road
Swindon, SN1 1TZ

General Information

What is a 'listed building'?

- 1.1 A 'listed building' is one that is included on the Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, issued by the Government under Act of Parliament. The Government is advised on selection by English Heritage.
- 1.2 Local councils do not decide what buildings are to be listed in this way, but they are responsible for controlling alterations to most listed buildings and protecting their surroundings.
- 1.3 About 1,000 of England's listed buildings are in the towns, villages and countryside of the Borough of Swindon. Swindon Borough's historic buildings range from the stone buildings of Inglesham in the north to the chalk and thatch cottages of Bishopstone in the South.

Why are buildings listed?

- 1.4 To identify and protect our heritage. It is Government policy that Britain's historic environment should be protected.
- 1.5 Listed buildings are important for their own value and as part of our cultural background and sense of national and regional identity. Their survival provides a valuable historic record and adds to the quality of our lives.
- 1.6 The Lists identify those buildings that deserve to be protected from harmful change. Under planning law, listed buildings have a special, protected status.

How do I find out whether a building is listed?

- 1.7 Local councils have copies of the List for their area, available for inspection. The List for Swindon Borough can be viewed at the Council's Planning and Transportation Department in Premier House, Station Road, Swindon. The fact that a building is listed will also be

revealed in the "property search" made when buying a building.



Do the lists ever change?

- 1.8 Lists for England were first drawn up in the 1950's. Some buildings in Swindon Borough were included then. Comprehensive surveys were last carried out in 1986 (Swindon town) and 1979 (rest of the Borough). A building whose significance has been overlooked may be added to the List by request to the Government. However, it would have to be of national, not just local, interest to be included. A building that becomes heavily damaged might be removed from the List. (Either event is not quite rare)

How are these buildings selected?

- 1.9 For architectural or historical interest, age and rarity. Every building built before 1700 which survives in anything like its original condition is listed. Most buildings from 1700-1840 are listed. Buildings erected after 1840 are only listed if they are of definite quality or special interest, or form part of an important group. These are often chosen as good examples of special

types, such as mills or farm buildings. A few outstanding buildings under 30 years old are listed. Bridges, walls, telephone boxes and milestones may be listed, as well as mansions, cottages, churches and pubs. Some listed buildings may appear to have little architectural quality, but are important for historical reasons. And some old buildings may look attractive, but are not listed, because they are not of national significance. This includes some buildings that are highly valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for local historical reasons. (These may, however, be protected from unconsidered demolition, by being in a 'Conservation Area'.)

even, in some cases, painting or cleaning of masonry.



Information on historical buildings

Swindon Borough Council

Design, Conservation & Development Group

Telephone: (01793) 466327

Wiltshire County Records Office, Trowbridge

Telephone: (01225) 713134

Wiltshire Buildings Record, Trowbridge

Telephone: (01225) 713740 (Tuesdays only)

National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon

Telephone: (01793) 414700

'Grades' of listed buildings

1.10 There are 3 categories of listed buildings – grades 1 and 2 (about 6% of listed buildings) identify buildings of particularly great importance to the nation. 94% of listed buildings are grade 2 (often simple vernacular architecture), representing a valuable major element in our environment. So, failure to protect grade 2 buildings from unsuitable alteration could lead to widespread damage. Controls over works to listed buildings are therefore similar, whatever the grade.

What is included in the 'listing'?

1.11 Listing applies to a whole building, inside and out, and includes any feature of interest. Any object that is fixed to a listed building as part of its design or construction is included in the listing. Any object within the curtilage of a listed building, which was ancillary to the building when it was listed and has formed part of the land since 1948, is included. If the special interest of the building would be affected, Listed Building Consent will be needed for internal alterations, such as the removal or insertion of partitions, doors, fireplaces, etc, as well as for external alterations, such as window replacement, fixing satellite dishes – or

Listed Building Consent

What is 'Listed Building Consent'?

2.1 Listed Building Consent is official permission to carry out certain works to a listed building. Consent is needed for any alteration which would affect the special character of a listed building. This can include alterations to the interior of the building and works to garden walls and other buildings or structures within the curtilage of a listed building. You must get this consent before you start work. It is a criminal offence to proceed without it. This applied even if the works are urgent.

The need for Listed Building Consent applies no matter what 'grade a building is, or whether works are to the front, rear, or the interior.¹

2.2 If you are in any doubt as to whether you require listed building consent for proposed building works then it is in your own interest to consult the Council's Environment and Property Department.

Failure to obtain prior consent, or to comply with conditions, can result in prosecution and the serving of an 'enforcement notice' requiring the building to be restored to its former state. Penalties can be as high as a £20,000 fine, or even imprisonment. In 1998, a firm was fined £20,000 for illegal works to a listed building in Swindon Borough.

2.3 Listed Building Consent is for works which may also need planning permission, such as external changes, or which do not need planning permission, such as internal alterations. Building Regulations approval may also be needed for some projects – telephone Building Control (01793) 463000.

How do I apply for Consent?

2.4 On a special form, obtained from and returned to Swindon Borough Council.

The better the information an application contains, the more effectively it can be dealt with.

2.5 Please give significant information, including post-code, to ensure identification of the building. Giving phone numbers will help if the Council needs to contact you quickly. The Council has to access the likely impact of the proposed alteration on the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Please provide full information to enable them to do this. On the form, clearly state the nature and purpose of the proposed works. (For complex proposals, you should include a detailed description or schedule of the works). If you wish to offer information of a confidential nature, include it in an accompanying letter, clearly marked "confidential".

Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals and to show why works which would affect the character of a listed building are necessary.



¹ Works urgently required for safety or health, or for preservation of the building should be limited to repair or temporary support or shelter, and to the minimum necessary. Notice should be given in writing to the Council as soon as reasonably practicable, justifying the work. In any legal proceedings it is a defence to prove that these steps were complied with.

What drawings are needed?

- ❶ An application must contain enough accurate information to clearly describe the proposed works, and to allow others to fully understand what effects they would have.
- ❷ If the Council is not satisfied that enough information has been submitted to allow the works to be properly assessed, it will request additional drawings or photographs.
- ❸ All applications must include a "Location Plan" to the scale 1:1250 or 1:2500. This should be an extract from an up-to-date Ordnance Survey map (available, at cost, from the Department of Environmental Services) showing the application site, marked red, and surrounding properties and street names.
- ❹ For extensions and for demolition of structures, a Site Plan (or 'Block Plan') at a scale of 1:2000 will be necessary. This should be based on an accurate site-survey. The building to be altered or demolished should be clearly identified and surrounding buildings and site features such as trees, hedges and boundary walls should be shown. For extensions, ground and building levels should be indicated.
- ❺ Please supply one set of original photographs clearly showing the elevations of the building and any features that would be affected.
- ❻ Accurate plans, sections and elevations are likely to be required. These should show the building's existing layout and appearance, based on an accurate survey, and the proposed works. Building materials should be noted on the drawings, which will have to be of large enough scale to clearly show the effect of the proposal. 1:50 scale drawings are often appropriate for plans, sections and elevations but it may be necessary to have larger-scale drawings of important details such as windows and doors. Any part of a listed building which it is proposed to demolish or remove should be clearly identified.
- ❼ 3 copies of each drawing are required. (In certain cases, where wider consultations

are called for, you may be asked for extra copies.)

- ❸ Each drawing should have a title and an identification number. Any amendment to a submitted drawing should be noted by adding a letter to its identification number. Drawing numbers should be listed on the application form (Question 6). Drawings should be clearly drawn,

Certificate of ownership

By law, an application cannot be dealt with if it is not accompanied by a certificate as to ownership of the building. Complete Certificate A (on the form) if the applicant is the sole owner. If the applicant is not the sole owner, then either Certificate B, C or D, obtainable from the Department of Planning and Transportation, should be completed.

Completed application

When completed, the application should be sent to Environmental Services. It should include:

- 3 completed application forms, signed and dated.
- 3 copies of the drawings or other information.
- If you cannot use certificate A on the form (question 7), enclose an alternative Certificate of Ownership, signed and dated.

Time taken for a decision

Applications need to be carefully considered. The target time for councils to deal with them is 8 weeks, though some applications raise difficult issues and take longer to decide. You can appeal to the Government if a decision is not given within the target time, or if consent is refused. Listed building consent may be granted subject to conditions. These conditions are important and must be strictly complied with.

Financial considerations



Grants for repairs

- 3.1 There is no automatic entitlement to a grant just because a building is listed. Responsibility for the cost of repair and maintenance of a building rests with its owner.
- 3.2 When property is purchased, costs of any necessary repairs should be assessed and anticipated – i.e. repair costs should be reflected in the price paid.
- 3.3 Historic building repair grants are no longer given by Swindon Borough Council (but may be available in other districts). Housing Improvement Grants, however, may be obtainable through the Council's Department of Health & Public Protection. Energy saving, draught-proofing and insulation grants may be available under Council and Government schemes.
- 3.4 English Heritage may give grants, subject to conditions, towards major repairs beyond an owner's means – particularly if the building is unoccupied and at risk, and of 'outstanding national interest' (usually grade 1 or 2 starred). Grant availability changes from time to time, so it may be worth double-checking this information.

Listed buildings and 'VAT'

- 3.5 Under Value-Added-Tax legislation, listed buildings are classed as 'protected buildings'. Subject to Customs & Excise approval, services carried out by a VAT

registered builder for the alteration of a listed building, for which consent is needed and has been obtained before the works are carried out, may be zero-rated. The materials used and the goods installed in connection with the properly authorised alterations can also be zero-rated, provided they are of a kind normally installed by a builder (i.e. not carpets or appliances) and are not for a do-it-yourself project. Professional services, such as those of an architect or surveyor, are standard-rated – even when supplied for the properly authorised alteration of a protected building. (Repairs, surprisingly, are also standard-rated). A leaflet (Notice 708, August 1997, 'Buildings and construction') and further information is available from your local Customs & Excise (VAT Enquiries) Office.

Repairs to listed buildings

Repairs in order to preserve

- 4.1 More harm can be caused to historic buildings by well-intentioned but uninformed “restoration” (usually alteration and replacement, rather than simple repair) than by deliberate damage or neglect.
- 4.2 For listed buildings, the aim of repair should be to preserve those parts of the building that are of architectural or historical interest (especially original fabric and features or interest), including those that have been added through time) and to halt or restrain decay, without altering the character of the building. The best repairs do no more than is necessary to achieve this.

Replacement is not ‘repair’

- 4.3 Replacement of an item that someone considers to be beyond mending is not a ‘repair’. For a ‘listed building’, this may be illegal without first obtaining ‘listed building consent’. If you are in any doubt as to whether building works may require consent, you should ask the Council’s building conservation section.
- 4.4 No matter how well they are made, replacements (even with replicas and careful copying of detail) do not have the historic interest of genuinely old items. Old items provide the authentic physical record of past craft-techniques and the use of materials. Replacement of historical fabric reduces a listed building’s authenticity and is alteration, not repair.
- 4.5 Replacement of an item that contributes to the special interest of a listed building (often an old item, such as a window) is an alteration requiring consent to be lawful. Replacement, life-for-like, of an item that contributes nothing to the building’s special interest is acceptable. However, replacement with a notably different item would normally be an alteration requiring consent. Taking down and rebuilding a wall (even using

the same materials) inevitably affects historical character and so requires consent.



Unsuitable repairs can damage historic buildings and may be illegal

- 4.6 A suitable repair (mending what is there, using appropriate methods and materials) need not require consent, but the alteration or removal of part of a listed building may require consent, to be lawful. ‘Repairs’ using unsuitable methods or materials may be classed as alterations requiring consent (without which such work is a serious offence). Examples of works that are unsuitable, and would usually be illegal without listed building consent, include:-
- unnecessary replacement of windows & doors
 - removal of ceilings (especially old lath & plaster ceilings) to expose ordinary floor-joists
 - removal of old lime plaster to expose rubble stonework
 - cement-rich “ribbon-pointing” to stone and brickwork (see overleaf)
 - application of hard cement plaster to walls
 - grit-blasting of old surfaces

Costly repair can be avoided by regular maintenance

Investigation, survey and records

- 4.7 The most suitable repairs are based on a proper understanding of the particular value of a building’s features and

construction. Any significant repairs should be preceded by a thorough, expert survey of a building's structure and an analysis of the cause of any defects. Investigation and interpretation of the history of a building may be needed before (and, possibly, during) work. It is wise to get advice from those who are trained and experienced in historic building matters. For any major work, the assistance of a suitable architect and builder is indispensable.

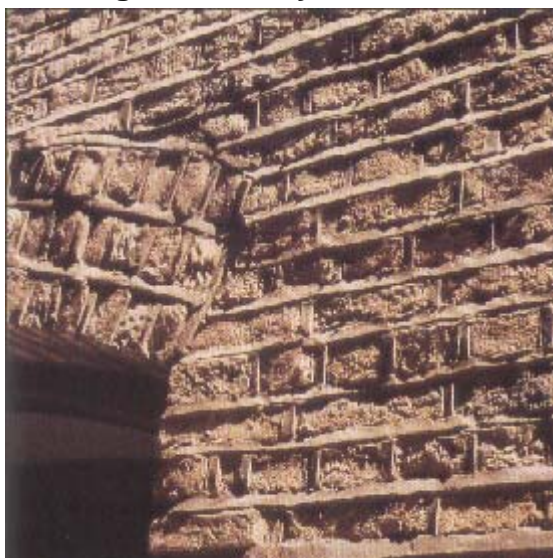
Windows

4.8 Thousands of wood windows are destroyed each year because people believe them to be beyond repair. This reduces the historic interest and harms the character of old buildings. Faulty (even partly rotten) windows can be repaired.¹ Complete stripping of old paintwork is seldom necessary – only loose, defective areas should be removed.

Plaster

4.9 Old plain plasterwork, and lath-and-plaster ceilings, should be preserved where possible. Where repairs are needed, lime-plaster will normally be best. Cement-rich plaster should be avoided.

Pointing of masonry



4.10 Bad pointing for stone or brickwork includes 'ribbon (or 'strap') pointing, which stands out from the face of the wall and creates an intrusive visual effect. It is also technically bad as it tends to trap moisture and direct it into the joints, rather than shedding it. Flush pointing in lime mortar is better. A typical traditional mix is 1:2:9, cement: lime: sand. Sound old mortar should not be removed. Unsound material should be manually raked out to a depth of at least 20-40 mm (depending on width of joint), flushed out and the new mortar pressed well in.

“Any change in the character of the pointing can be visually and physically damaging and requires listed building consent.”²

Materials

- 4.11 For any repair, it is important to use appropriate materials. Natural materials such as wood, clay, slate and lead are the normally suitable materials for old buildings. But for new work, such as structural ties, modern materials such as stainless steel can be quite acceptable.
- 4.12 For technical, aesthetic and historical reasons, sound, new materials – not second-hand – should be used. New work should not be deliberately disguised or falsely represented as being old, but repairs should be crudely obtrusive.
- 4.13 Cement mortar, concrete roof tiles, “reconstituted” ‘stone’ or ‘slate’, and standard, mass-produced plastic (uPVC) or aluminium windows, for example, are almost never suitable for use on historic buildings.

Damp-proofing

4.14 Measures to damp-proof floors and walls can in some cases harm old structures and be ineffective. Old buildings are designed to ‘breathe’. Trapping moisture by damp-proofing can prevent this. Surfaces should not generally be coated with water-repellents, eg silicone.

Publications

English Heritage [0171 973 3434], the Georgian Group [0171 387 1720], and SPAB (Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings) [0171 377 1644] have inexpensive leaflets on the repair of historic buildings.

Footnotes



Guidance on alterations to listed buildings is given in Annex C to Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: "Planning and the Historic Environment" (PPG15), published in September 1994. Much of that advice also applies to repairs.

- 1 "The Repair of Wood Windows" by Andrew Townsend & Martyn Clarke. Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
 - 2 PPG15. Annex C. Paragraph C10.
-

Poor repairs can damage historic buildings

Alterations to listed buildings

Alterations require Consent.....

Alterations affecting a listed building's special interest (inside or out) require 'listed building consent' to be lawful. ¹

This can apply to the removal of part of the building, such as a window, door, plaster, floor or skirting boards – or even, in some cases, painting or cleaning of brickwork or stone.

- 5.1 It is seldom desirable to alter listed buildings. They are rare and valuable structures. The purpose of 'listing' them is to preserve features that in many cases have survived for hundreds of years. A listed building's special interest should not be allowed to be reduced by alternation.
- 5.2 The Council has a duty to protect listed buildings from unsuitable works and has published policies on this.
-

Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals and to show why works affecting the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary. ³

- 5.3 The fact that current owners wish to alter listed buildings to suit their own requirements is not itself sufficient reason for consent to be granted. Alterations that are unjustified, or unnecessary to preserve buildings, should not be countenanced.
- 5.4 Alterations that could be easily reversed are less objectionable than alterations that would be permanent, or impossible or difficult to undo.
- 5.5 If alteration is appropriate, considerable architectural and building skills are needed to avoid damaging historical features and building fabric. Alterations should be drawn up by those specially trained or experienced in such work. Not all architects or builders are specialists in historic buildings.



Investigation, survey and records

- 5.6 Alteration of a listed building should be based on a proper understanding of the particular value of the building's features, structure and construction. For some works, therefore, investigation and interpretation of the history of a building will be needed before (and, possibly, during) work. If so, past records should be sought and inspected. If needed in order to justify a proposed alteration, such information should be submitted with any application for listed building consent.

Materials

- 5.7 For any alteration, it is important to use appropriate materials. Natural materials such as wood, clay, slate and lead are the normally suitable materials for old buildings. Cement plaster, concrete roof-tiles, artificial 'stone' or 'slate' and standard, factory-made windows are unsuitable for historic buildings.
- 5.8 For technical, aesthetic and other reasons, only sound, new materials (not second-hand) should be used. New work should not be deliberately disguised, or falsely represented as being old, but alterations should not be crudely obtrusive.

"Restoration"

- 5.9 Features which have been added to a building over the years do not necessarily detract from its quality. They

are often of interest as part of the building's 'story'. If later features of interest are removed merely to 'restore' a building to a previous form the building's historical value can be seriously reduced.

"Reinstatement"

- 5.10 Normally, the reinstatement of lost features with modern replicas is not appropriate. Reconstruction of this sort should only be attempted if based on clear evidence. More harm can be caused to historic buildings by well-intentioned but uninformed "restoration" than by deliberate damage or neglect. Reconstruction to one person's idea of "the past" should be avoided.
- 5.11 (An exception is the reinstatement of features which formed an important element of the original architectural design – if their absence upsets the architectural composition of a building which has otherwise largely survived.)

Interiors

- 5.12 The plan of a building, interior spaces, staircases, doors and other features are part of the special interest of a building and should be left unaltered.

Windows, doors and openings

- 5.13 The number, pattern and size of door and window openings are a significant part of the character of old buildings. These features should not normally be altered. As a rule, windows and doors in historic buildings should be repaired, not replaced, unless they are of an unsuitable modern type.

Plaster and coatings

- 5.14 Plaster or other coatings should not be stripped off merely to expose rubble-stone, brick, or timber-framing that was never intended to be seen. The application of coatings that would be very difficult or impossible to remove should be avoided.

Roofs

- 5.15 The roof is nearly always a dominant feature of a building and the retention of its original structure, shape and cladding is normally very desirable.

For major work to a listed building, the assistance of an architect and builder with experience of historical buildings, will be indispensable.

Thatch

- 5.16 Thatched roofs, especially those with medieval undersides, should be preserved. The Council will not grant consent for their replacement with other materials. Ridges should be as simple as possible and not worked into elaborately shaped 'block ridges'.

External Painting

- 5.17 Painting requires listed building consent if it would affect the special character of a listed building. (Colour might be an issue.) Previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted over (though badly decayed stonework can be protected with a lime-based coating).

Points of masonry

- 5.18 Masonry should not be re-pointed unless this is essential due to loose material. "Any change in the character of the pointing can be visually and physically damaging and requires listed building consent."⁴

Footnotes



The main legislation applying to listed buildings is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.



Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) set out Government policy on different aspects of planning. Where this guidance is material to decisions on planning applications, it must be taken into account. Guidance on alterations to listed buildings is given in Annex C to Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: "Planning and the

Historic Environment” (PPG15), published in
September 1994.



The Swindon Borough Local Plan must also be
taken account of when deciding applications.

- 1 Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and
Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2 Swindon Borough Local Plan. Environment Chapter.
- 3 PPG15 Part 3 (Listed Building Control) Paragraph 3.4.
- 4 PPG15 Annex C Paragraph C10.

Extensions *General considerations*

Planning permission

6.1 Most extensions to buildings require 'planning permission', for which application is made to the local council. The council will grant permission, unless it can be shown that an extension will cause unacceptable harm. An extension will not be refused planning permission just because a neighbour objects to it. However, an extension will not necessarily be approved just because neighbours have not objected.

Listed Building Consent

6.2 Special rules apply to buildings officially 'listed' by the Government for their special architectural or historic interest. An extension which affects the special interest of a 'listed building' will need 'Listed Building Consent' (whether or not it also requires planning permission). For extensions to listed buildings, the Council takes account of the factors considered with all extensions, but also pays special attention to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting, and any features of special interest. The effect that an extension would have on the character or appearance of the building is relevant, as is any damage which might be caused to an old structure by joining on new construction.

General considerations

6.3 The Council considers the wider context and the general public interest – not just the application site and its immediately adjacent buildings, and not just the wishes of those who wish to extend a building. The interests of neighbours and others are considered.¹ The Council considers the effect which an extension would have on the existing building and its surroundings, including the 'amenity' of neighbouring property.



It does not follow that because a certain type of extension has been approved in the past, it will necessarily be approved today.

- 6.4 Many extensions were erected when planning controls were less stringent than now, and are of indifferent quality in both design and materials. Government now advises local authorities to reject poor designs – for example, those which would be clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.²
- 6.5 Along with design and appearance, issues of outlook, daylight, sunlight, privacy, vegetation, parking and traffic may need to be considered.
- 6.6 Good neighbourliness and fairness are also considerations. For example, it might be proper to consider any "overlooking" or loss of privacy which might be experienced by a neighbour as a result of a new building.³
- 6.7 An extension might present an overbearing or oppressive appearance to a neighbouring property due to its size and location, or because adjoining property is at a lower level.
- 6.8 If the Council decides not grant permission (or listed building consent), you can appeal against this. A Planning Inspector will then adjudicate.

Council policy on all new buildings

6.9 The Council has no wish to dictate taste but has an obligation to protect the quality of the built environment and amenity. The Council requires all

extensions to be appropriate in terms of design, scale, bulk, height, proportion and materials and to harmonise with the general character of the area in which it is set.⁴

- 6.10 Any new building should protect important vegetation, such as trees or hedges, as well as the amenities of neighbours in terms of visual intrusion, privacy, and disturbance. A safe and appropriate means of access for pedestrians and vehicles should be ensured, including adequate car parking and vehicle manoeuvring space within a safe and convenient layout, providing, where appropriate, reasonable access for disabled people.
- 6.11 Any important landscape, ecological, archaeological, architectural, or historical features should be protected.



House extensions

- 6.12 Swindon Borough Council has policies on house extensions in its Borough Local Plan, and has published a 'House Extensions Design Guide'.
- 6.13 The Council will approve applications for residential extensions so long as they would not adversely affect the character or appearance of the original house or its surroundings; unacceptably detract from a neighbour's daylight or privacy, or cause road safety or car parking problems.⁵ Residential extensions should ensure that existing trees and hedgerows of quality are retained and that suitable boundary hedges, walls and fences are incorporated. (Conditions may be attached to planning permissions requiring adequate

measures to protect trees and hedges during construction.)⁶


- 6.14 To reduce overlooking of other residences, minimum distances (set out in the Council's House Extensions Design Guide) should be maintained between windows of different residences.




- 6.15 The Council has a duty to protect 'listed buildings' from unsuitable changes. Government advice to local authorities is that:-

*"there should be effective protection for the historic environment. Those aspects of our past which have been identified as being of historic importance are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives..."*⁷

Footnotes

 Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) set out Government policy on different aspects of planning. Where this guidance is material to decisions on planning application it must be taken into account. Planning Policy Guidance Note Number 1 "General Policy and Principles" ('PPG1') was published February 1997.

 The Swindon Borough Local Plan must also be taken account of when deciding application.

- 1 PPG1 Paragraph 64.
- 2 PPG1 Paragraph 17.
- 3 PPG1 Paragraph 64.
- 4 Swindon Borough Local Plan, Environment Chapter.
- 5 Swindon Borough Local Plan, Housing Chapter.
- 6 Swindon Borough Local Plan, Housing Chapter.
- 7 PPG1 Paragraph 32.

Extensions *Historic building issues*

Historic buildings

- 7.1 Unsuitable extensions can spoil old buildings. A building whose character is damaged in this way loses appeal and, so, some of its value.
- 7.2 An extension to a listed building will need Listed Building Consent (and will often need planning permission and possibly Building Regulations approval). In deciding whether to grant consent, the Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, and any features of special interest.
- 7.3 The size, shape and surroundings of old buildings are often vital parts of their character, and changes to these will reduce the building's special interest. For example, the size and shape of a small thatched cottage is often a feature of its character and historic interest. Any significant extension, especially one affecting the old roof structure, can radically change the form of such a building forever.



- 7.4 By the use of a sensitive design, a new element may be successfully added to some listed buildings without destroying their character, and this is acceptable (especially if it is necessary to keep the building in use). However, there will always be some buildings where any extension would be damaging and should not be permitted.

It is unlikely that a building which has served satisfactorily as a residence for many decades will need to be extended to ensure its survival.



Justification

- 7.5 Extensions to listed buildings should be justified. For example, it might be that without a certain type of extension an old building might not be capable of accommodating a particularly beneficial new use. This is most likely to apply in the case of public buildings. An example is the archive extension that was added to the offices of the National Monuments Record Centre in Swindon (pictured above).

If a historic building has been extended in the past in a way that reduces its special interest, that is not a logical reason to allow further unsuitable alterations.

Professional advice

- 7.6 Successful extensions require the application of an intimate knowledge of the building type that is being extended and a sensitive handling of scale and detail. When dealing with historic buildings it is wise to get professional advice from those who have experience of the design and construction of old buildings. The assistance of a suitable architect and builder is indispensable for any major work. Advice on proposed building works to listed buildings is available from the Department of Planning and Transportation.

Where the quality of spaces between buildings is important, extensions should not be allowed to harm this.

Houses and cottages

- 7.7 As a general rule for listed residences, only extensions that are primarily for the

provision of essential facilities such as adequate bathrooms and kitchens should be considered. Upper-level bedroom space can rarely be added to old buildings without harming their character

separateness and distinction between old and new.

Extensions taller than single-storey are often unsuitable for historic cottages because they cover up old walls and roof and radically change the size, shape or setting of what has survived in some cases for hundreds of years.

- 7.8 An appeal against Swindon Council's refusal to permit a 1½ storey extension to a listed cottage was dismissed with the comment that, if the extension was built,
"No indication of the original size of the cottage or the degree to which it had been extended would be left. The appearance of the cottage would be significantly changed and its historical integrity, as one of the smaller cottages in the locality, would be lost."
- 7.9 A single-storey extension may be the only acceptable way of adding to a listed cottage and allowing the form and fabric of the original building to remain apparent in the way that a 2-storey extension would not.
- 7.10 In some cases, however, even single-storey extensions may have undesirable effects.
- 7.11 Where an extension is acceptable, a single-storey extension on the front or back wall should often have a low-pitched roof, to reduce its impact. On the gable-end wall of a steeply-pitched roofed building an extension with the same roof-pitch as the main building may be suitable in some cases (although the covering-up of an attractive old wall may be undesirable).

Location

- 7.12 Occasionally, an extension may best be built at a short distance from the original building, linked by a single-storey element, thereby achieving a degree of

Construction

- 7.13 New constructions should not be allowed to damage a listed structure. Old roof structures can be permanently damaged by a new extension being joined on. New foundations, close by, can disturb old foundations. Even the 'flashing' necessary to make junctions waterproof can cause harm to old walls.

Architectural style and design

- 7.14 **An extension to a listed building should be architecturally subservient** to it in terms of form (size and shape), materials and details such as windows and doors. The original building should continue to be dominant. Extensions should respect the original architecture and should not obscure the original form. It is sometimes desirable to have a distinction between old and new so that the original design can remain apparent. If the original form is obscured then the building loses historic character and its special interest is diminished.
- 7.15 **Flat roofed extensions** should generally be avoided (because they often look modern and out of character), but there may be circumstances where an almost-flat roof for a small single-storey extension will be the least obtrusive, or where a flat roof behind a parapet may be appropriate.
- 7.16 **Glazed extensions**, if very well designed, are in some cases more appropriate than solid walls.
- 7.17 **Details** such as windows, doors and rainwater goods should be selected with care, to harmonise with the style and quality of detailing to the original building. Number and proportions of openings have a great impact on the appearance of an extension and should be carefully considered.

Materials and workmanship

- 7.18 For any extension it is important to use appropriate materials. Natural materials

such as wood, clay, slate and lead are the normally suitable materials for extensions to old buildings. Fake features and artificial, 'look-alike' materials should generally be avoided. "Reconstituted stone" (which is, in fact, made of concrete), fibre-cement "slates", or concrete roof tiles are unsuitable. The details of construction and the quality of workmanship are also important in determining the impact of the final result. For example, flat, smooth rendered walls can jar with old, uneven or textured walls. Where stone is to be used it should be good local stone (or matching) and to use a suitable pattern of coursing. For good stone-pointing, mortar should be textured, of suitable colour and kept in line with the surface of the stones.

