

LISTED BUILDING INTERIORS

Information Leaflet

Preamble -

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This information leaflet has been produced to guide listed building owners/occupiers in their consideration of proposed internal works. The information is primarily directed at dwelling houses but the information and guidance is equally pertinent and relevant to the interiors of listed buildings in different uses, such as industrial buildings, public buildings, public houses, schools etc.

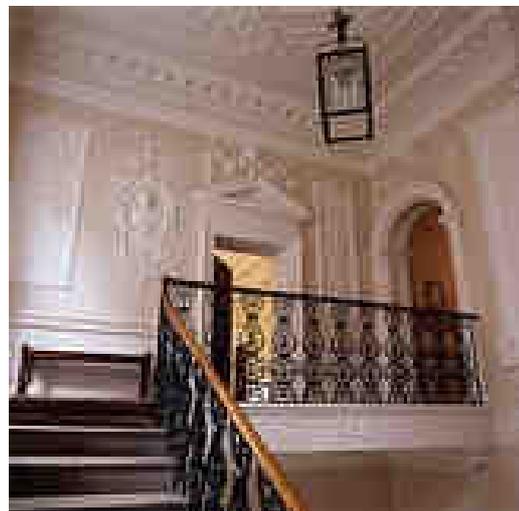
Listed Building Consent is required for any work of *alteration* to the interior of a listed building which may affect its special character and appearance. *Repairs*, carried out on a **strictly like-for-like basis in all respects** can generally be undertaken without Listed Building Consent, however, where the proposed repair works are extensive Listed Building Consent can sometimes be required. Building owners/occupiers are advised to discuss their proposals with the Local Planning Authority at an early stage (see 3.3).

The information contained within this document is provided as informal advice and without prejudice to any formal decision of the Council in its capacity as Local Planning Authority.

1.0 The status of Interiors:

Historic interiors are very important. Not only do they give us an insight into how people lived in past times but they also show us the differences in living conditions and the hierarchy of a social structure. Grand interiors show us the wealth and privilege of a few, where finance enabled high quality interiors and set fashions in interior design. Historic interiors can show how the grand interiors of the aristocracy set precedents and fashions that percolated down and were copied, on a lesser budget, in smaller houses and cottages. This spectrum of interiors is therefore important to our understanding of historic buildings and equally so to our social and economic evolution. In this regard, simple and grander interiors are equally valuable, not only to the buildings of which they are part but also to our social and cultural history. Historic buildings can be perceived as examples of 'standing' archaeology, in many cases retaining and preserving elements of former use and layout which can assist in their study, understanding and appreciation.

It is acknowledged that the interiors of buildings, more so than their exteriors, are susceptible to sensibilities of fashion and change. Historic buildings may, therefore, retain evidence of interior design and planning from a variety of periods that, cumulatively, contribute to their significance through their special character and interest.



Listed Building status protects the entire **interior** of a building – this includes all physical elements and features. Specifically, listing protects any ‘object or structure’ fixed to the building. With regard to interiors, this would include such elements as – fire surrounds, grates and hearths, wall panelling, skirtings, dados and picture rails, window shutters, doors, doorcases and architraves, timber and plaster mouldings to walls and ceilings, staircases (principal and secondary), historic wall treatments, built-in cupboards or other pieces of fixed/built-in furniture and historic light fittings. This short list is not exhaustive and other, idiosyncratic or unique features or elements may also be protected by listing status.

Listing descriptions are only indicative and are primarily written to aid identification of a building. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive or exclusive record of all the features of importance. Absence from the list description of any reference to a feature (whether internal or external) does not indicate that it is not of interest or that it can be removed, or altered, without Listed Building Consent. Where there may be doubt, advice from the Conservation Officer should always be sought. The **National Planning Policy Framework** (2012) – ‘Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment’ contains policies relating to works to designated, and non-designated, heritage assets. This information leaflet expands upon the advice and guidance given in the ‘**Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide**’ (HEPPG), 2010.

1.1 Plan-form:

The HEPPG (clause 182) states ‘*the plan form of a building is frequently one of its most important characteristics*’ and furthermore that ‘*proposals to remove or modify internal arrangements.....will be subject to the same considerations of impact on significance (particularly architectural interest)*’.

In conjunction with the features and elements of a building, the plan-form of a building is one of its most important characteristics. Although buildings that are several centuries old will have undergone some internal re-ordering/alteration the plan-form that has survived *at the date of listing* will be considered important. The plan-form of a historic building can provide valuable, and sometimes subtle, evidence and references as to how the building was originally conceived and laid-out and how changes in that plan have been made over succeeding centuries. This not only relates to the principal structural walls of a house but also to its partitions (generally of lath & plaster or timber boarded construction) and other dividing walls (sometimes of brickwork or stonework).

In association with the plan-form of a building are the spaces that the plan-form has created. In

many instances the *volume* of the space was a design consideration and its proportions and size were carefully considered (including the location of windows, doors and fireplaces). In other instances, earlier buildings were adapted and re-fashioned to provide ‘up to date’ interiors or spaces.

Historic buildings, therefore, often display a panoply of room sizes and forms, including spaces or rooms that were intended for specific purposes and may, with modern eyes, appear as wasteful space or inconvenient spaces. This does not diminish their value or significance as integral parts of the original, or evolved, plan-form of a listed building. Many vernacular cottages were constructed on a ‘one-room’ deep plan, often with each room interlinked by a doorway (rather than a corridor). This *cellular* plan-form is considered to be a significant characteristic of such buildings. Any alterations to plan-form will, therefore, be carefully assessed, and judged, in accordance with the relative importance.

Based on this philosophy there is a presumption *against* the removal of structural walls and partitions that are considered to contribute to the understanding and historic layout of the interior of a listed building. In association with this philosophy, the dividing of rooms, the amalgamation of two rooms into one room or the creation/insertion of sanitary facilities (en-suites) within them will generally be resisted as a diminishment of the special character of the interior of the listed building.

The proposed change of use of a historic building from residential to an alternate use may entail a scheme of internal re-ordering which may involve the removal of walls/partitions, the introduction of new sub-division into rooms, creation of new doorways to join rooms, new internal screening, fire-resistant screens and fire doors and perhaps the introduction of new vertical access (lifts/staircases). With any such proposal the appreciation and evaluation of the historic plan form should provide the basis or starting point for such alterations. Proposals that are considered to diminish the special internal character and interest of an interior are unlikely to be acceptable.

1.2 Evolution:

As discussed above, interiors can display a panoply of change as fashions came and went. In many cases, certain elements survived each ‘change’ and have been retained to the present day. In most cases, such changes should be accepted as part of the organic history of the building. Consequently, the *wholesale* re-instatement of lost, decayed or superseded elements of an interior is not appropriate. Furthermore, speculative reconstruction should be

avoided, as should the reinstatement of features that were deliberately superseded by later historic additions.

With historic interiors the survival of elements from past times may be considered, by owners or occupiers, as not being practical or appropriate for modern living. As a listed building with a protected interior, such buildings have constraints that may have to be accepted as being an integral and important part of them. A limited degree of sensitive change may be acceptable, and the necessary consent obtained to carry out such work. However, high significance may be placed on internal elements as being important to the buildings special character and interest, and in these circumstances it is unlikely that consent would be given for their alteration or removal. A further constraint with a listed building interior is the acceptance of the aesthetic choices made by past owners of the house. If a new owner, for example, disliked a particular fireplace or other decorative or architectural element of an interior this would not be considered a justifiable reason for its replacement or removal.



The date of listing of a building is a seminal date from which decisions are made with regard to alteration and change. Alterations and changes up to the date of listing are accepted as part of the buildings evolution. The statutory listing of a building engenders a protection of that character and appearance that has evolved. Following statutory listing, formal consent is required to undertake alterations and changes to the building. This process endeavours to protect the historical changes that have occurred up to the date of listing and to 'manage' sensitive change through Listed Building Consent. Listed buildings can still evolve but statutory listing places significance and value on previous alterations and changes.

Although the constraints on listed building interiors can be onerous, there are aesthetic works that can be carried out, generally, without the need for

Listed Building Consent. Such works are carpeting, painting and wallpapering of walls and ceilings, soft furnishings and movable furniture. A caveat to such works would be where they affect particularly important internal decorative finishes such as panelling and decorative plasterwork.

1.3 Restoration:

In some cases a proposal may be put forward to restore an aspect or element of an interior. The definition of 'restoration' (as defined by English Heritage) is *to return a place (or element) to a known, earlier, state on the basis of compelling evidence, without conjecture*. HEPPG (clauses 158-168) provides detailed advice on 'restoration'.

With any such proposal, **sound physical evidence** would be required (archaeological and historical) to provide a clear and justifiable basis for restoration. In most cases the physical evidence may provide only a low percentage of certainty, in general terms and in detail. On this basis, therefore, a high percentage of conjecture would be required for authentic restoration. Conjectural restoration would not be supported.

Where sound physical evidence survives the question of the 'significance' of the building element in question must be assessed. The building element in its current (altered) form may be deemed as having relative significance in its own right, and being an important part and contributory factor in the 'reading' and understanding of the evolution of the building. Where such significance is placed on a building element its restoration is unlikely to be supported.

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2.0 INTERIOR ELEMENTS:

2.1 Walls (structural & non-structural):

Apart from the external walls of a house, its internal walls can be a mixture of structural walls (i.e. load bearing) and non-load bearing walls such as partitions. The location and configuration of the internal walls to a house are directly related to its plan-form (see 1.1 above). Where houses have evolved and been enlarged over time the study of its walls – their thicknesses and their constructional material(s) – can provide valuable evidence of its development/evolution. Structural walls are, by their nature, very important and provide the principal 'bones' of a house plan. Partitions – of lath & plaster, brickwork, timber-framing (and infill), and timber-boarding are also considered to be important elements of an interior. HEPPG states (clause 183) that *the sub-division of buildings.....that are significant for their open interiors, impressive proportions and long sight-*

lines, may have a considerable impact on significance.

- In general, the wholesale or partial removal of structural and non-structural walls would be resisted, as this would significantly diminish the historic plan-form of the building.
- The relocation/removal of internal walls to create larger (or smaller) rooms would also be resisted as this would also diminish the historic plan-form of the building



- The introduction of new partitions or walls to divide existing rooms and spaces (i.e. splitting a room to make two rooms, creating a corridor or creating an en-suite in part of the room) would generally be resisted, as this would diminish the historic plan-form of the building.
- The formation of new doorways (standard size) to link rooms or spaces not previously linked (or to obtain separate/alternative access into a space) would be considered on a case-by-case basis and the impact of the proposed new doorway would be assessed on its location, size and form.
- The removal or re-location, of any existing, historic, decorative wall treatments such as panelling, dados, skirtings, picture rails etc would be resisted.
- The wholesale removal of historic wall plaster would be resisted as this is considered a fundamental element, and characteristic, of the buildings interior

2.2 Doorways & Doors:

Doors and doorframes can often provide valuable datable evidence of a house interior. They can

also display a sense of hierarchy of rooms, spaces and floors in the extent and character of their form and detailing. As elements of historic joinery work and as examples of their period and use, doors and doorframes are considered to be significant elements of a historic interior. In modern times there has been a 'fashion' to strip the paint from doors and doorframes. Because historic doors were generally constructed from good quality softwood (and sometimes in hardwood) once revealed there is a tendency to wax and polish the exposed timber. Historically, all softwood would have received a painted finish. Only exotic woods such as mahogany, and sometimes oak, would have been left un-painted, but such doors are generally very rare.

- Historic doors and doorframes (including door-linings and architraves) should be retained in-situ, and repaired where necessary.
- Where historic ironmongery survives – knobs, locks, bolts, escutcheons and hinges – these elements should all be retained and repaired/overhauled.
- Historic doors and doorframes should never be stripped of their painted finish. The removal of the paint will alter the character and appearance of the door/doorframe, and the interior of which it is part. The stripping of paint will always be resisted. The stripping of paint can also result in the loss of 'archaeological' layers of paint that could be used to ascertain the original decorative scheme for an interior.
- Where an existing door is no longer required (for example if a room has two doorways) for practical reasons then it shall be retained in-situ and locked/fixed shut. The door/doorframe should not be removed and its original location would be lost.
- The relocation of a complete door/doorframe will, generally, be resisted, as this would alter the historic plan-form of the interior.
- Proposals to 'up-grade' historic door/architraves in relation to fire safety will be considered on a case-by-case basis. There would be a presumption, however, in favour of retaining the historic door rather than replacing it with a fire-resistant replica,

2.3 Plasterwork:

Plasterwork falls into two distinct categories – plain smooth wall plaster and decorative plasterwork. Many historic buildings retain and display decorative plasterwork. This can vary from simple plaster cornices to elaborate and grand schemes undertaken with design and skill. Much

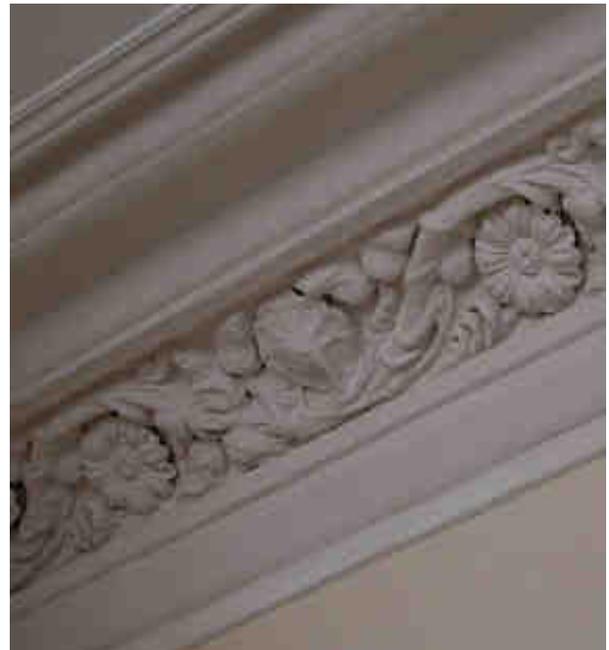
decorative plasterwork is datable and therefore provides valuable information about the history and evolution of a house.



The use of decorative plasterwork can also reveal a sense of hierarchy within an interior and this is therefore important in understanding the spaces and rooms of a house and to what purpose they may have been used.

The most predominant type of plaster found in historic buildings will be plain wall plaster. Where original, in most cases this will be a lime/sand mix reinforced with animal hair. Such plaster was usually finished with a timber float giving a slightly rough or light/medium 'sandpaper' type finish. Although attempts were made to make the wall plaster as smooth as possible, historic plaster usually displays undulations and variance in uniformity. This is considered to be an important and distinctive characteristic. (The application of limewash, and subsequent coats, smoothes out the surface of plaster over time).

Traditional lime plaster allows the substrate (brick/stone) to 'breathe' and therefore assist in the dissipation of any rising damp. Modern, dense cement plasters are wholly inappropriate and unsympathetic to historic fabric and effectively 'seal' the wall surface and do not allow the substrate to 'breathe'. The consequence of this inevitably leads to problems with damp and associated bulging, detachment and blistering of the surface.



- Original/historic plasterwork (plain and decorative) should always be retained and repaired.
- Where large areas of decorative plasterwork have been lost (through deterioration/decay) sound justification would need to be made for their re-introduction.
- Decorative plasterwork can often be disguised by many layers of paint. Where paint is to be removed this should only be undertaken under 'specialist' advice. It is a skilled job and should not be approached/undertaken on a DIY basis.
- Historic plasterwork may retain its original paint/colour scheme under later layers. This is important archaeological evidence for how the plasterwork was originally conceived and finished and may also provide valuable evidence for the original colour scheme of the entire room. Architectural paint research may sometimes be required to be undertaken to establish historic paint schemes.
- The introduction of new services (pipework/cabling etc) to an interior should never interfere or necessitate the cutting, boring, notching or partial removal of any decorative/moulded plasterwork. Alternative routes must be found to negate any damage to historic plasterwork.
- Structural engineering operations and solutions should not necessitate the removal, disturbance, damage or concealment of decorative plasterwork. Alternative, conservation solutions should be suggested by the structural engineer.

- The insertion of modern suspended ceilings below decorative plaster ceilings will generally be resisted on the grounds that the fixings for the new ceiling will require drilling and fixing to the existing lath and plaster ceiling bed and that the introduction of a suspended ceiling will diminish the character and appearance of the space into which it is to be inserted.
- Internal walls to historic buildings were always plastered. Rough stonework and brickwork were never intended to be seen. Historically, a lime based wall plaster was always used. This allows any moisture in the solid walls to dissipate naturally into the interior without causing cracking, bulging and blistering as is common where a more impervious, cement based, plaster has been used. All historic lime wall plaster should be retained wherever possible. Where areas have deteriorated or been replaced with harder, modern, plaster, these areas (only) should be carefully removed and lime plaster patched in.
- The *wholesale* removal of historic lime wall plaster to an individual room (or an entire house interior) should not be undertaken without sound & satisfactory justification. The existing plaster is a fundamental and significant part of the interior character and its wholesale removal would constitute an alteration that would require Listed Building Consent.

2.4 Floors:

HEPPG states (clause 184) that *the introduction of new floors into a building or removal of historic floors and ceilings may have a considerable impact on an asset's significance.*

Floors in historic buildings take a variety of forms – stone flags/slabs, quarry tiles, decorative tiles, brick paviers, timber boards (softwood and hardwood) and limeash. All of these materials are considered to be significant and important elements of a building and can convey hierarchy, room usage and are often datable. Visible, historic, alterations to floor surfaces can provide important evidence of an interior and these are, therefore, considered valuable in being able to 'read' and understand the history of the building. Any level change, excavation, or lifting of existing ground floor surfaces/finishes may reveal archaeological information that is important to the history and understanding of the building.

- There is a general presumption that floor materials will be retained and repaired.

- Decayed or eroded stone flags/slabs, tiles and paviers may be removed but they should be replaced with, sound, like-for-like materials (identically matching the existing).
- Where it is proposed to lift a solid floor surface and install a damp proof membrane (or for any other purpose), it will be expected that the existing floor level will be retained and that the floor surface/finish will be re-laid to its original pattern/form. Such works require Listed Building Consent and, in most cases, an archaeological watching brief – the Local Planning Authority will impose such a condition if deemed appropriate.



- The lifting of floors for the installation of an underfloor heating system would require Listed Building Consent. The existing floor surface level must be retained and the existing floor surface material/finish re-laid to the original pattern/form. An archaeological watching brief may also be required for such works.
- Flooring materials can alter the character and appearance of interiors and the Local Planning Authority will consider new or alternative floor materials carefully. Where a historic floor surface is deemed to be wholly decayed or unusable then it should be recorded in drawn and photographic form as part of an application for Listed Building Consent. Where appropriate, its removal and replacement with a new floor surface may be granted Consent.
- The covering of historic floor surfaces with linoleum, carpet etc may be undertaken but the covering should not be glued to the existing floor surface. The laying of ceramic tiles over existing floor surfaces will generally be resisted, as the adhesive/grout is likely to permanently damage the original floor surface material.
- Timber floorboards can be susceptible to beetle infestation and water decay. There is a general presumption that where individual or areas of decayed floorboards

require renewal that **only** those areas of decay should be cut out and replaced with like-for-like material.

- Where floorboards have to be taken up to carry out other works they should always be photographed first, numbered with chalk and carefully stacked ready for re-laying.
- Where timber floorboards have been patched in the past and those patches are considered to be of sub-standard workmanship, then those areas may be removed and patched in with timber to match the existing.
- The sanding of historic floorboards can significantly alter the character and appearance of a room. Such works should be avoided and any application for Listed Building Consent for such works will be resisted as being an alien treatment of timber floors to historic buildings.
- With many historic timber floors there is an element of undulation caused by the slow deflection of floor joists. This undulation is considered to be an important element of historic floors and should be retained. Proposals to 'level-up' a floor will generally be resisted.



- Many historic buildings retain limeash floors (most often confined to attics and second floors). The survival of limeash floors is considered to be highly important (as so many have been removed). There is a general presumption against their removal. The (often) undulating nature of limeash floors is a fundamental characteristic and should be retained. Proposals to screed over them to make them flat will generally be resisted. Where limeash floors are cracked these can generally be cleaned out and filled. Where sections are badly cracked or decayed those areas (only) can be carefully removed and new limeash, of a similar mix, patched in.

- Proposals for the installation of new services (cables/pipework etc) should always take into account and assess the existing floor surfaces and materials prior to routes being formulated. Wherever possible the installation of new services should avoid the need to cut, notch or drill historic timbers or require the trenching across historic ground floors. The Local Planning Authority will expect to see that all alternative methods and means have been explored/investigated before such works as described above are permitted.
- Often suspended timber floors (and limeash floors) require some structural strengthening works. The Local Planning Authority would expect a conservation-led approach to be taken to structural works requiring the minimal amount of disturbance or removal of historic fabric. Any such proposals will need to be fully explained in a comprehensive conservation engineers structural report and recommendations, which should be submitted for consideration to the Local Planning Authority.
- Proposals to create or install a new timber floor deck over existing floors will need to be fully and soundly justified. Such a proposal could have significant impact on the historic fabric and also create loading issues with regard to floor strength.

2.5 Ceilings:

Historic plastered ceilings (decorative and plain) are constructed by way of timber laths nailed to the underside of the joists and a lime plaster (reinforced with animal hair) applied in several coats over the laths. A lime/sand finishing coat is applied to give a smooth surface. A timber float was always used, as opposed to a metal float as used in modern work.



Ceilings can represent a hierarchy of rooms and spaces. Essentially, the more ornate the ceiling the more prestigious the room and its use. Some

cottage ceilings were never intended to be underdrawn with lath and plaster – their floor joists being left exposed (along with the floorboards above) and sometimes painted with limewash. Evidence of whether or not a ceiling was underdrawn with lath and plaster (and then at some point removed) can usually be detected from the visible (archaeological) evidence of tiny nail holes, used to secure the laths, and plaster staining of the timbers. In some cases exposed ceiling joists and spine beams were later plastered over as interior fashions changed and occupiers desired a more ‘polite’ interior finish and appearance.

- Original decorative or plain plastered ceilings should be retained and repaired in-situ. Their wholesale removal will generally be resisted.
- The wholesale removal of a lath & plaster ceiling (or decorative plaster ceiling) would require an application for Listed Building Consent. Sound justification would need to be provided to support such an application.
- Repairs to plaster ceilings should always be undertaken on a strict like-for-like basis using timber laths and a lime based plaster. Decayed areas can be carefully cut out and new laths and plaster installed.
- The replacement of lath and plaster ceilings with modern plasterboard and skim will generally be resisted, on application, as being injurious to the character and appearance of the room/space.
- Where there is physical, visual or archaeological evidence of the presence of a former lath & plaster ceiling a new lath & plaster ceiling should be re-installed.
- Where lath & plastered spine beams survive these are considered an important part of the ceiling and room interior. The removal of the lath & plaster to expose the timberwork of the beam will, therefore, generally be resisted on application as being injurious to the character and appearance of the room/space.
- Some vernacular cottage/house beams retain historic metal ‘meat’ hooks etc. These are an important survival and should be retained in-situ.

2.6 Chimneybreasts, Fire-surrounds and Hearths:

HEPPG (clause 187) states that ‘*chimneybreasts will frequently contribute strongly to a building’s significance & removing or obscuring them is likely to affect the asset’s significance*’.

The provision of heat is a functional and necessary requirement for buildings. From earliest times up until the 1920s and as late as the 1950s, open fires were the normal method of heating a house. Chimneybreasts, fireplaces (also known as fire surrounds or chimneypieces) grates and hearths are considered to be a fundamental part of the functional, architectural and decorative history and interest of a building. In most cases they are the ‘centre-piece’ to a room – a focal point – bringing with that attention the application of fashionable and decorative design elements. They range in size, form, shape and material, as well as degrees of decoration and are often valuable dating elements of a house. As with many other features of the interior of houses they also respond to the hierarchy of rooms and spaces. In this respect some fireplaces can be very simple in design, particularly to secondary bedrooms and former staff quarters/rooms. Such features are, therefore, considered to be important elements of the buildings history & evolution.



Up until the mid-nineteenth century it was customary to place the hearth slab flush with the floor boards (to both ground and upper floors). In the later 19th century it became more fashionable to have a raised hearth slab and by the early 20th century this was normal practice. As an element (flush with a floor surface) such hearth slabs were easy to cover over with a new, raised, hearth slab, or in more recent times with fitted carpet.

The grate itself represented the fire-burning part of the fireplace. In the 17th century grates were brick or stone lined cavities (perhaps with a cast-iron fire-back) with a metal fire basket for logs. In the 18th century as fireplaces became smaller and more ‘polite’ elements of the interior décor of a room the ‘hob-grate’ evolved comprising stone or cast-iron cheeks with a small cavity for coals held in place by two or three horizontal metal bars.



Coal had begun to be more readily available from the late 17th and early 18th century but it remained an expensive commodity. In the late 18th century and early 19th century the hob-grate gave way to a cast-iron insert with a metal grate or fire-basket level with the floor. Metal trays for ashes also became part of the grate design. During the 19th century the grate continued to be developed and the mass-produced cast-iron inserts (many with decorative tiles to their sides) became popular and universal. As fashions in architecture changed, fire surrounds were often replaced to reflect the latest 'fashion'.

Fire surrounds of the 17th century are generally large and constructed of stone, however, examples constructed from oak can also be found. In the late 17th century the stone, or marble, bolection fire-surround became fashionable. In the 18th century marble (and slate) began to be used widely and highly decorative fire surrounds were produced. During the 18th century many fire surrounds were also made from timber and given a painted finish (sometimes to mimic exotic marbles). The use of painted timber, marbles and cast-iron fire surrounds were used throughout the 19th century – the later Victorians being particularly fond of dark marbles such as black, brown and dark green. The later 19th and early 20th century gave rise to Art Nouveau influenced designs and Classical Revival designs. The inter-war period, and throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, saw the evolution of the fully tiled fire surround and hearth – usually evoking an Art Deco design and appearance. These fire surrounds are particularly indicative of a particular historical phase of interior design and contribute to, and complement, an interior of this period.

- Chimneybreasts, fire-surrounds, hearths and grates are particularly important and

significant elements of an interior and should always be retained and repaired.

- Historically, later grates (and hearths) may have been added to an earlier fire-surround. These should be retained as being representative of the evolution of fireplace technology and design. The replacement of later elements to 'unify' a fireplace to a singular period will generally be resisted.
- Existing flush stone hearth slabs (and tiled hearths) should always be retained in-situ
- Where a fire-surround and grate has been removed (historically) the re-introduction of a new fire-surround and grate may be considered acceptable subject to a suitable and appropriate design (based on architectural research) being put forward for consideration.

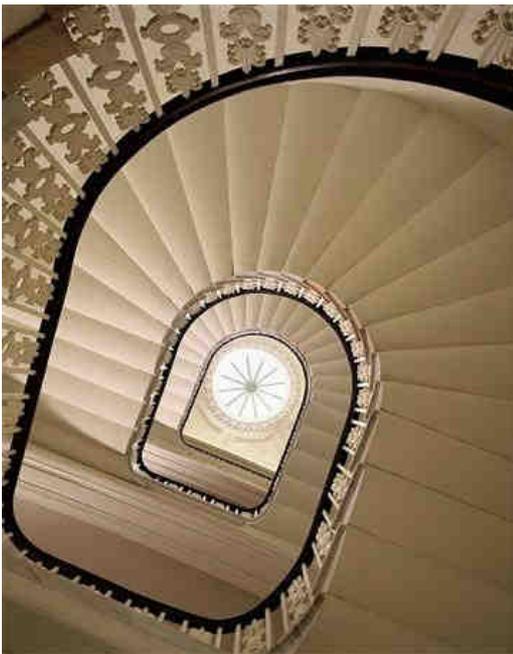


- Where only a chimneybreast survives marking the former presence of a fireplace (historically removed) this element is considered to have importance and significance in its own right. Proposals to remove a chimneybreast, or form openings through it (such as doorways), will generally be resisted, as this is likely to erode the plan-form and historical integrity of the chimneybreast.
- Second-hand fireplaces and modern 'of-the-peg' period fireplaces will seldom be appropriate for a historic interior as their design, scale and proportion is unlikely to be correct for the interior they are intended for.
- In the post-war period many historic fireplaces were boarded over (i.e. the grate was boxed or covered in with a sheet of metal or timber). In many cases the grate was left in-situ. The re-opening of such fireplaces will generally be supported.

- The cleaning of fire-surrounds (particularly marble/slate fire-surrounds) is considered to be a specialist operation and should never be undertaken on an amateur basis using household cleaning fluids or detergents. Advice should always be sought on the best method for cleaning and specialist cleaners/conservators should be consulted.
- Timber fire surrounds of the 18th and 19th century were always intended to have a painted finish. Removal of the paint to such fireplaces is considered unacceptable and historically incorrect. Re-decoration should be undertaken in a colour scheme appropriate to its age and period.

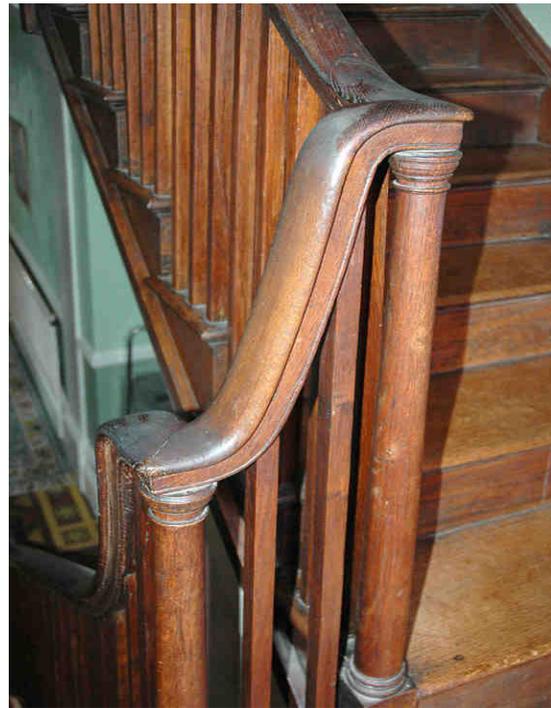
2.7 Staircases:

HEPPG (clause 182) states that *'the plan form of a building is frequently one of its most important characteristics and....staircases (whether decorated or plain, principal or secondary)... are likely to form part of its significance'*.



Staircases are considered to be integral and highly significant elements of a house and their retention is considered to be of paramount importance. Their architectural and aesthetic character establishes them as a highly significant functional, architectural and decorative element of a historic building interior. Staircases can provide valuable dating evidence for a building in displaying elements that changed with architectural and decorative fashion. Some houses have principal and secondary staircases. Secondary (and tertiary) staircases are also considered to be important as elements relating to

the hierarchy of usage and indicators of the former social and cultural history of the building.



A staircase usually comprises the flight of treads and risers, open or closed strings to the flights, newel posts, balusters and handrailing. The majority of staircases are constructed in timber but stone (cantilevered) staircases can be found. During the 17th century the predominant material was oak – usually with a natural, waxed/oiled finish. In the 18th century softwood became the predominant material as nearly every staircase was intended to have a painted finish. Occasional, very high status, oak staircases continued to be created during the first half of the 18th century (purposefully un-painted).

In the mid-late 18th century, the use of wrought iron and cast-iron balustrading became popular and staircases generally became more simple and elegant in form and detail. From the late 18th century to circa 1830, the 'stick' baluster staircase became almost universal – generally with an un-painted (polished) hardwood moulded handrail.

From the 1830s onwards staircases began to copy older styles and the 'heavy-looking' Victorian staircase began to become fashionable. The general components of such staircases are chunky, over-sized turned newel posts – many with a ball finial - and turned balusters and heavy dark wood handrailing.

Not only are the visual elements of a staircase considered to be of significance but also on many occasions the, often, hidden construction of a staircase can reveal much about its history and craftsmanship.

The understanding of the historic plan-form of a building relating to the locations and configurations of its staircase or staircases, are indivisible. Research and understanding of the plan-form of a building - taking into account its staircases and their locations, form, style and detailing - can reveal much about the architectural development of a building. On rare occasions, staircases can have been historically altered or even re-located and a detailed examination may reveal such evidence.

- The permanent removal of a staircase will, generally, always be resisted.
- The dismantling and re-location and/or re-configuring of an existing staircase will, generally, always be resisted.
- Historic staircases should always be retained and repaired in-situ on a like-for-like basis.
- If a staircase is considered to be unsafe or un-sound then a conservation structural engineer's assessment and recommendations should be put forward for any remedial repair/strengthening works that are considered necessary. Such works may require Listed Building Consent.
- Where parts or elements of a staircase are damaged beyond economic repair then these elements should be replaced on a strictly like-for-like basis (only where physical evidence survives to inform such a work).



- Where parts of a staircase have been, historically, lost – i.e. balusters – then these may be replaced but only where the physical evidence survives allowing a non-conjectural re-instatement.
- Staircases of the 17th century and early 18th century that were constructed from oak were not given a painted finish. As the use of oak was replaced by softwood construction this type of timber was *always* given a painted finish. In the late 18th and early 19th century the fashion

for hardwood handrails became fashionable. These were un-painted but the remainder of the staircase was given a painted finish.

- Metalwork balustrades were always painted. Architectural paint research may indicate an original paint scheme for such metalwork.
- Historic staircases do not need to comply with modern Building Regulations. Any proposal to remove or alter them, on this basis, is unlikely to be supported.
- Proposals for the up-grading of a staircase to meet modern fire/building regulations are always likely to be contentious. Early discussion with regard to such proposals should be made with the Local Planning Authority.

2.8 Kitchens & Bathrooms:

The kitchen was always an important room or space within a historic building. Dependent on the size of the property this was either part of a 'living' room or a separate room (perhaps operated by household servants). Changes in lifestyle and kitchen technology and fashion have resulted in such a practical room or space being changed on a regular basis (i.e. almost every generation). Such rooms have, therefore, perhaps undergone more change and alteration than almost any other room in a house resulting in the loss of original fabric and its replacement or alteration over succeeding generations.

The idea of a separate bathroom within a house (together with an internal toilet) was generally unheard of in the vast majority of houses up until the very late 19th century. Houses constructed before that time would have relied on an outside privy and, when required, a portable bath located within a bedroom or dressing room. Piped cold water did not become a standard house component until the late 19th century and piped hot water is a 20th century development.

Today almost every house has a separate kitchen and a separate bathroom/toilet. Although houses constructed in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries may have had a kitchen they would not have had a bathroom and internal toilet. The inclusion of such would have required the utilisation of one of the bedrooms or a dressing room or on occasion the physical extension of the house to provide a separate bathroom.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the fashion for multiple bathrooms/showerooms ("en-suites") has increased.

- The replacement of existing kitchen and bathroom fixed furniture with new does

not generally require Listed Building Consent.

- Listed Building Consent would only be required where such works involve alterations to existing wall/door/window locations/sizes etc.
- The formation of any new holes through an external wall (for vents/grilles, pipework etc) would generally require Listed Building Consent. The installation of new external pipework would also require Listed Building Consent.
- The tiling of walls and floors to both kitchen and bathrooms would not generally require Listed Building Consent.
- The permanent removal of any existing floor finish (such as stone flags, clay tiles/paviours etc) would require Listed Building Consent. Existing, historic, floor finishes should be retained and repaired wherever possible.
- The formation of an en-suite within an existing room will generally be resisted as this may significantly alter the historic plan-form of the house and of the particular room (see section 1.1). Where proposals are put forward for consideration full and clear details of their proposed drainage pipework routes must be given.

2.9 Cellars & Attics:

Many historic buildings contain cellars, or basements, generally intended for storage but occasionally for occupation. The type, size and extent of cellars can vary enormously dependant on the size, and status, of the building they are below. Where they have survived, more or less intact their existing character and appearance is considered to be important to the 'reading' and understanding of the spaces and its former use(s).

- Alterations to a cellar, for example the proposed 'tanking' or waterproofing of its floor, walls (and ceiling) would require Listed Building Consent.
- Any existing/original features or fixtures within the cellar should be retained in-situ.
- The lowering of a cellar floor, to attain more headroom, is unlikely to be supported in respect of the potential impact of such works on the fabric and spatial qualities of the cellar.

The attic, or roof space to many historic properties were either used for habitable occupation or for a variety of storage uses. If used for habitable occupation the space may contain rudimentary fireplaces and, perhaps, a small window, or two. In many instances roof spaces contain original

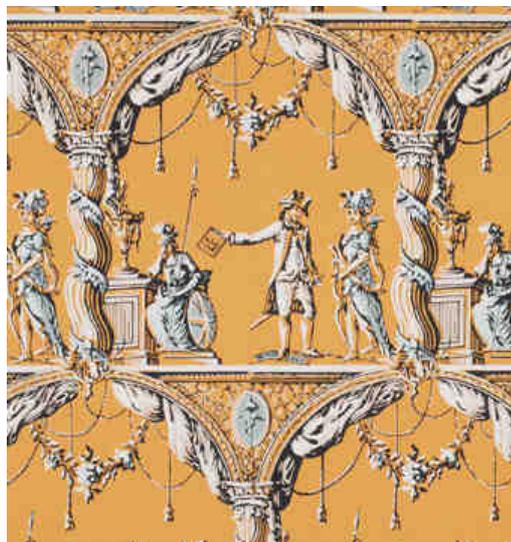
roof trusses. These structural elements are considered to be an important and significant part of such spaces.

- The introduction of new or additional windows (or rooflights) to a roof space/attic may seriously compromise its historic character and interest. Listed Building Consent would be required for such works.
- Historic roof trusses should be retained and repaired in-situ. Where structural engineering works may be required such works may require Listed Building Consent.
- Roof trusses are considered to be important and significant elements and their alteration, removal or re-location/re-configuration would require Listed Building Consent, which is likely to be resisted on application.

2.10 Surface Finishes:

Decorative surface finishes such as paints and wallpapers respond to fashion and period and generally, therefore, few historic schemes survive on view. Where historic paint schemes and historic wallpapers survive these should be retained as important elements of the former decorative style and taste of a particular period or generation.

As a result of the idiosyncrasies of fashion there are many examples where original decorative schemes have been obliterated by later schemes. Where there is a desire to return an interior to its original decorative colour/finish this must only be undertaken with the aid of sound 'archaeological' evidence in the form of specialist architectural paint research. Conjectural schemes are unlikely to have any historic basis and will, therefore, be incorrect and out of context.



It is not normal practice for the Local Planning Authority to invite an application for Listed Building Consent for the re-decoration and/or wallpapering of the interiors to listed buildings. However, where this work would involve the removal of historic paint schemes and/or historic wallpapers an application is likely to be required, as this will have an effect on the special character and appearance of the listed building.

There is a modern practice to strip the paint from softwood elements to an interior and give them a waxed or oiled finish. This occurs chiefly to panelled doors, architraves, skirtings and window shutters. Historically, only oak (and other hardwoods such as mahogany) were left unpainted. ALL softwood was given a painted finish. The removal of paint to such elements is considered to be wholly inappropriate and such works would be deemed to significantly alter the interior character and appearance of a listed building. To this end, an application for Listed Building Consent would be required to carry out such works (of which the Authority would normally not support or encourage).

In a similar vein to the above, the stripping and waxing/oiling of historic floorboards is also considered to significantly alter the interior character and appearance of a listed building. To this end, an application for Listed Building Consent would be required to carry out such works (of which the Authority would normally not support or encourage).



2.11 Internal Fixtures and Fittings:

Legislation is clear that any object or structure fixed to the building is protected by the statutory 'listing' of the building itself – i.e. any object or structure (externally or internally) fixed to the

building should be treated as part of that building. With specific regard to interiors, this will cover such elements as fireplaces, hearths, grates, thrawls, floor finishes, skirting-boards, wall-panelling, dados, decorative plasterwork, doors and architraves, window shutters and architraves, fixed cupboards and shelving to recesses or alcoves, and staircases.

Alongside such elements as these are other 'fixtures' that are considered to be integral and closely associated with the historic development of the interiors of a listed building. In essence these are elements that were fixed when they were introduced into the building or elements that were specifically introduced into the building and have been part of its interior for a considerable number of years. Such elements are: kitchen ranges, bread-ovens, spits and roasting accessories, decorative works of art/statuary, light fittings and pieces of fixed furniture specially designed for the building.

Protection, under the listing, is not extended to movable or un-fixed items such as chairs and tables, object d'art, carpets, general household furniture, pictures etc. However, a proviso to this is if any of those objects are deemed to fall within the category of elements as described in the preceding paragraph.

In conclusion:

- All fixtures and fittings should be retained and repaired. Their removal (or re-configuration/re-location) will generally be resisted.
- Some historic fixtures/fittings may not be required for contemporary living by some owners/tenants, however, as historic fixtures/fittings of the building they are protected and should be retained in-situ.
- Owners/occupiers should seek advice from the Local Planning Authority **prior** to any works connected with internal fixtures/fittings.

3.0 Further Advice & Information:

3.1 Policies:

The Derbyshire Dales Local Plan (2005) contains the following, relevant, policies relating to works to a Listed Building -

NBE16: Development Affecting a Listed Building

NBE17: Alterations and Extensions to a Listed Building

NBE18: Conversion and Change of Use of a Listed Building

NBE19: Demolition of Listed Buildings

3.2 Building Regulations:

Under current legislation relating to the Building Regulations, listed buildings enjoy certain exemptions. Primarily, the Regulations recognise the idiosyncrasies of their *special* architectural and historic interest and accept that the majority of listed buildings cannot readily comply with the Regulations without causing undue harm to that special character and appearance.



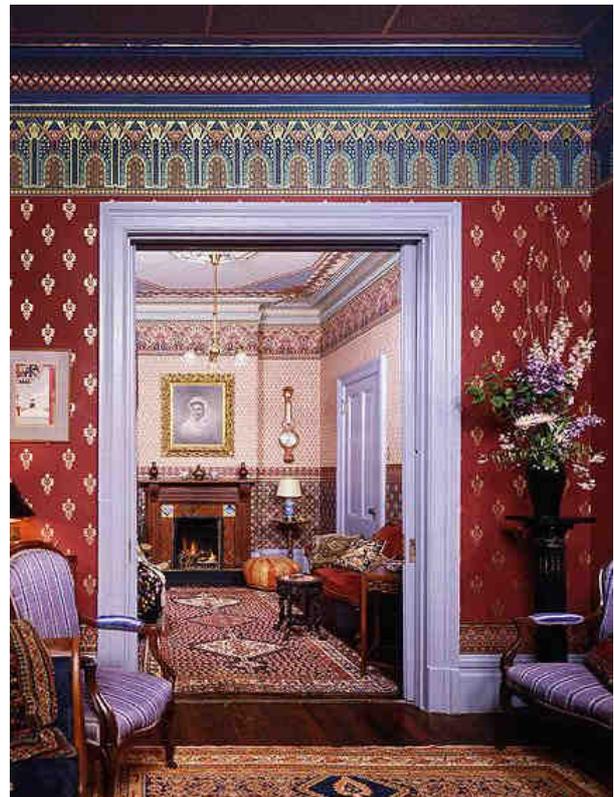
The building elements that will, most likely, not comply with current Building Regulations are single-glazed windows, staircases and fire safety. Windows, although perhaps more readily considered as elements of the exterior of a building, nevertheless play an important part in the interior of any room within a listed building. With regard to windows, the design, style, pattern, form and dimensions of historic windows are considered to be important and fundamental architectural elements of a listed building. They represent fashion and styles of their time (providing valuable dating evidence) and also display fine quality joinery details. To this end, they should be retained and repaired, and only where it is un-economic to repair them should they be replaced on a **strictly** like-for-like basis. It is considered that the introduction of double-glazed windows to listed buildings would result in the distortion and increase in the size of the timber frames and result in new windows that lack the historic quality of design and craftsmanship of single-glazed windows. Such an alteration would be considered to diminish and harm the special character and appearance of the listed building.

Some historic staircases may display a steepness and/or narrowness that may be considered at odds with our modern perception of a staircase. In many cases handrail heights will also be at variance with the Building Regulations. The

current Building Regulations, however, do not require such staircases to be replaced or altered and Listed Building Consent is unlikely to be granted for their removal, alteration or re-configuration.

In terms of fire safety a proposed **change of use** of the interior of a listed building may generally require it to comply with current fire regulations. In terms of listed building interiors the potential impact on the historic fabric of the building would need to be given very careful consideration.

It is possible that in planning terms a proposed *change of use* to a listed building interior would be acceptable. However, if that change of use were to involve physical works to the interior (and exterior) fabric of the building which (in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority) were to be detrimental to the buildings historic fabric, character, appearance and significance, then it is unlikely that such works of alteration would receive Listed Building Consent.



In conclusion, proposed works to the interior of a listed building, based on the requirements of the current Building Regulations, must be shown to have been **thoroughly considered and assessed in terms of their potential impact on all aspects of the historic fabric.**

3.3 Advice and Information:

The Conservation & Design Section at the District Council can answer queries and provide specialist design and conservation advice relating to Listed

Buildings. It is always advised and recommended that **pre-application advice** be sought at an early stage in order that potential costs associated with abortive drawn and written work is not undertaken. Officers may be able to confirm, at an early stage, if there is likely to be support for an application for particular works, however, there may be some occasions when further consideration is required before advice can be given. **Any advice and information given by officers is provided without prejudice to any formal decision of the Council in its capacity as Local Planning Authority.**

3.4 Un-authorised works to the interior of a Listed Building:

Works undertaken to the interior of a listed building, without having the benefit of Listed Building Consent, would be deemed an un-authorised work to a listed building which could lead to enforcement action and ultimately prosecution for the perpetrator as such works can constitute a criminal offence. In order to avoid such circumstances, discussion with the Local Planning Authority is strongly advised at an *early stage* and certainly **prior** to any works being undertaken.

There is no time-limit for un-authorised works which have been undertaken to a listed building. New owners (who did not carry out the un-authorised works) can be served with an Enforcement Notice by the Local Planning Authority to rectify un-authorised works. Potential new owners of listed buildings are, therefore, strongly recommended to investigate all or any works that have been undertaken to the property since its date of listing to confirm whether or not consent has been granted for those works.

3.5 Application Procedure:

Applications for **Listed Building Consent** are made to the Local Planning Authority (Derbyshire Dales District Council).

Following pre-application discussion with the Local Planning Authority, and its advice, a formal application should be prepared. In association with the statutory information requirements** for an application the following information would also be required -

- Drawings (relevant floor plans, sections & internal elevations) **as existing**
- Drawings (relevant floor plans, sections & internal elevations) **as proposed**
- Large scale drawings for details, such as windows/doors etc.
- Detailed schedule of works/specification
- Structural Engineers* report & recommendations (where applicable)

- Photographs of the area(s) or element(s) where the works are being proposed
- A Statement of Significance & Impact**
- A Design & Access Statement**

Following validation of an application the Local Planning Authority may be required to consult with English Heritage and the national amenity societies. With regard to interiors any element of demolition (i.e. permanent removal/loss) would trigger the requirement to consult the relevant amenity society(ies) who will provide their comments to the Local Planning Authority. This applies to any listing grade (I, II* & II).

The Local Planning Authority is also required to consult English Heritage (relating to any listing grade) where it considers that the proposed works may involve *the demolition of all, or a substantial part of the interior.*

With regard to the interiors to grade I & II* properties if English Heritage, or any of the amenity societies, object to the proposals the application may need to be referred to the Secretary of State. In these circumstances applications can take up to **12** weeks to determine. Where there is not a referral to the Secretary of State applications can take up to **8** weeks to determine. Owners/occupiers should take these time periods into account when programming their works.

* A *conservation* engineer, or an engineer with experience of working with historic/listed buildings is recommended.

** advice and guidance notes are available on the Council's website

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