

### 2.36 Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other designated heritage assets

#### What is the aim of this policy?

- 2.276** This policy aims to manage new development affecting designated heritage assets in a manner that sustains and enhances their heritage significance, including the contribution of their setting.
- 2.277** Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are 'designated heritage assets'. Other designated heritage assets relevant to Lewisham are registered parks and gardens (Horniman Gardens and Manor House Gardens are Grade II), scheduled monuments and the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, of which the buffer zone and part of the setting falls within Lewisham's boundary. It is considered that Core Strategy Policy 16 adequately covers issues relating to the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Buffer Zone and setting.

#### DM Policy 36

##### **New development, changes of use and alterations affecting designated heritage assets and their setting: conservation areas, listed buildings, schedule of ancient monuments and registered parks and gardens**

##### **A. General principles**

1. For development proposals affecting heritage assets the Council will require a statement that describes the significance of the asset and its setting, and an assessment of the impact on that significance.
2. Where the significance of an asset may be harmed or lost through physical alteration or destruction, or development within its setting, the Council will require clear and convincing justification. The Council will consider the wider public benefits which may flow from the development where these are fully justified in the impact assessment.
3. The Council encourages the adaptation of historic buildings to improve energy efficiency in line with the detailed guidance provided by English Heritage. Careful consideration should be given to the most appropriate options for insulation, power use and power generation. Intrusive interventions, such as externally mounted micro-generation equipment or external wall insulation, should be avoided where these would unacceptably alter the character and appearance of the heritage asset. The Council encourages the retention and thermal upgrading of historic windows.

##### **B. Conservation areas**

4. The Council, having paid special attention to the special interest of its Conservation Areas, and the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance, will not grant planning permission where:
  - a. new development or alterations and extensions to existing buildings is incompatible with the special characteristics of the area, its buildings, spaces, settings and plot coverage, scale, form and materials

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- b. development, which in isolation would lead to less than substantial harm to the building or area, but cumulatively would adversely affect the character and appearance of the conservation area
  - c. development adjacent to a Conservation Area would have a negative impact on the significance of that area.
5. The Council will encourage the reinstatement or require the retention of architectural and landscaping features, such as front gardens and boundary walls, important to an area's character or appearance, if necessary by the use of Article 4 Directions.
6. The Council will require bin stores and bike sheds to be located at the side or rear of properties where a front access to the side and rear exists.

**C. Listed buildings**

7. In order to ensure the conservation of Listed Buildings the Council will:
- a. only grant consent for alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings which relate sensitively to the building's significance and sustain and enhance its significance and integrity
  - b. have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of Listed Buildings in considering any application in their vicinity, and consider opportunities for new development within the setting to enhance or better reveal the significance of the asset
  - c. use its powers under Sections 47, 48 and 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to ensure that Listed Buildings are maintained to a reasonable standard.
8. When considering applications for change of use of Listed Buildings, the Council will consider the contribution of the existing use and the impact of any proposed new use to the significance and long-term viability of the historic building. The Council will seek to ensure that the building is put into an optimum viable use i.e. the one that causes least harm to the significance of the building, not just through initial changes but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear or any likely future changes. The implications of complying with Building Regulations, such as fire escapes, will be taken into account prior to determining applications for change of use.

**D. Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens**

9. Scheduled Monuments will be protected and preserved in accordance with Government regulation. Where the site or setting is adversely affected planning permission will be refused.
10. When considering the impact of a development proposal on Registered Parks and Gardens, or on their settings, the Council will consider that any loss or substantial harm to these assets will be in wholly exceptional circumstances. The Council will apply the provision in point 2 of the above policy to the assets.

### Justification

- 2.278** DM Policy 36 implements Core Strategy Policy 16, which sets out a framework for the protection of the borough's designated heritage assets. Core Strategy Policy 16 delivers the approach in London Plan Policies 7.8 (Heritage assets and archaeology) and 7.9 (Heritage-led regeneration).
- 2.279** The Council has a duty to preserve the character of Listed Buildings under the provisions of Sections 54-56 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. The policy is consistent with the NPPF. The Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide to PPS5 provides guidance to assessing development applications for Listed Buildings. The policy seeks to achieve this aim through measures to control, improve and guide changes to Listed Buildings.
- 2.280** DM Policy 36 summarises the steps the borough will take to manage changes to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens so that their value and significance as designated heritage assets is maintained and enhanced. The Council has an ongoing programme to review the borough, proposing buildings suitable for statutory listing, and designating new conservation areas and extending existing ones as appropriate and as resources permit.
- 2.281** The significance of heritage assets can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the asset or development within its setting. The policy is intended to ensure that the particular significance of a heritage assets and the value it holds for this and future generations is fully understood. This understanding serves as a baseline for assessing the impact of any development so that that proper weight can be given to its conservation.
- 2.282** The value of the townscape of a Conservation Area, for example, depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings – on the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular 'mix' of uses; on characteristic materials and detailing; on street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and spaces between buildings. Not all elements of a Conservation Area though contribute to its significance and their replacement and alterations can represent opportunities for the enhancement of the area, including enhancement by development of high quality and innovative design. The emphasis is to guide and control development, not to prevent it.
- 2.283** The character of a Conservation Area can heavily depend on the cohesiveness of form and consistency of materials and detailing of buildings. The alteration or loss of one individual feature to one building may appear minor in the wider context, but incrementally such small changes can erode the special interest of an area. The Council has made Article 4 Directions to a number of Conservation Areas to protect distinctive features.
- 2.284** The Council supports improvements to the energy performance of listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas. The suitability of thermal improvement measures needs to be carefully considered with regard to the effect on the appearance and characteristics of the building. External wall insulation, for example, can markedly alter the appearance of a building, which makes other measures such as roof insulation, draught-proofing, energy efficient lighting better and more suitable investments for reducing energy use. Detailed advice is available from English Heritage and the Council's conservation team.
- 2.285** The best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active use. For the great majority this must mean economically viable uses if they are to survive. New and even continuing uses will often necessitate some degree of adaptation. The range

and acceptability of proposed uses must therefore be a major consideration when the future of listed buildings is in question. The aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the historic building.