

Adopted Local Plan - Conservation

Conservation

Objective: To protect those features, sites and settlements of historical, architectural and archaeological interest which contribute to the District's and the nation's character, whilst ensuring that where new development occurs, it respects and, wherever possible, enhances the environment within which it is located.

6.1

This chapter sets out the Local Planning Authority's policies and approach to all aspects of conserving the important elements of man's influence on the environment and ensuring a good standard of new development.

Listed buildings

6.2

Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are included in a statutory list of such buildings issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The buildings are graded in descending order of importance: I, II* and II.

6.3

The Local Plan area is rich in the diversity of its buildings and other structures of historic and architectural interest which contribute to the visual quality of the built environment. These range from St. Mary's Cathedral in Salisbury, stately homes, large country houses and churches, to more modest cottages, barns, bridges and even milestones. Within the Local Plan area there are just under 3000 listed buildings. Of these, 115 are listed Grade I and therefore considered to be of exceptional national interest. These include Salisbury Cathedral; Wilton House; Wardour Castle, Tisbury; Amesbury Abbey, and Trafalgar House at Downton.

6.4

Listed building consent is required for the demolition of all or any part of a listed building. Consent is also required for extensions or alterations to a listed building which would in any manner affect its character. The Local Planning Authority will protect listed buildings from demolition (including re-erection elsewhere), or unsuitable alterations which would detract from their quality and interest. Consent for demolition will only be given in exceptional circumstances, and the criteria set out in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) will need to be satisfied before any application is approved. For example, every effort has to be made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use for the building and documentary evidence to this effect will be required. Evidence that the freehold of the building has been offered for sale on the

open market is required, and the offer of a lease or the imposition of restrictive covenants which unreasonably limit the chances of finding a new use for the building have to be well justified. Where applications for listed building consent for demolition are due to the alleged poor condition of the building, the Local Planning Authority will normally require a structural engineer's report and costings of the necessary repair works. Proposals which result in the demolition of all but the facade of the building will normally be rejected.

Policy CN1

6.5

The dismantling of listed buildings for re-erecting elsewhere represents a net loss of the historic building stock of the District. It inevitably results in a loss of historic integrity and the supplementing of original fabric and will therefore be resisted. A supporting statement will be required demonstrating the efforts which have been undertaken to secure a suitable alternative re-use of the building prior to the submission of any application. Proposals for re-erection locally will only be considered as an alternative to demolition or where the life of the structure and its appreciation by the public would be substantially enhanced, for example where a listed building is located within a modern working farm yard.

Policy CN2

6.6

Within the curtilage of a listed building there are often attractive boundary walls, stables and other outbuildings which should be retained. Demolition will only be acceptable where such features are not of architectural or historic interest or do not contribute to the character, appearance or setting of the historic building. In any event, listed building consent is required for their demolition.

6.7

Applications for new works to listed buildings will be carefully assessed. Policy CN3 sets out the criteria to be satisfied by any proposal. Extensions will be required to be of an appropriate scale and design and in materials matching those of the original building. In general, a conservative approach to alterations and repair will be encouraged, so that the character and historic value of the building are not diminished by over-restoration, therefore architectural or historic features of a listed building, including internal features, should be retained unaltered as these are important to the character of the building. In some circumstances the Local Planning Authority may consider that the enlargement of the

building is inappropriate in principle, for example, in the case of a small cottage where its essential architectural character would be lost. Further information on these matters is contained in the District Council's advisory leaflet: Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions.

Policy CN3

6.8

Sometimes the best opportunity for retaining a building of architectural and historic interest may come from changing its use. Buildings should be structurally sound and capable of conversion without complete or substantial reconstruction, and a structural survey may be required. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the alterations required to allow that change of use do not destroy the character of the building, or do not have an adverse effect on the structure. The use itself must also be compatible with the surrounding environment and must be consistent with other policies in the Local Plan.

Policy CN4

6.9

Proposals for the change of use of listed buildings may be accompanied by applications to develop within their curtilage, for example to provide more accommodation or car parking on land which originally formed part of the yard or garden. In many cases the open areas surrounding listed buildings, which may be within or beyond the curtilage, are essential to their character. Where this is the case, development within these open areas will be resisted.

Policy CN5

6.10

The District is predominantly rural and proposals for the change of use of agricultural buildings are common. The unpartitioned interior of an agricultural building, such as a barn, usually contains long sight lines with the structural elements and fittings exposed. These, unobscured and undivided, constitute the essential historical character of such buildings and any proposed change of use should not detract from the building's original fabric and character.

Policy CN6

6.11

Residential uses for listed agricultural buildings by their very nature tend to destroy original fabric by making new openings, removing structural

elements, disrupting walls and rooflines with new doors, windows and chimney stacks, blocking interior spaces and creating enclosed residential plots which mitigate against the agricultural setting and integrity of any farmstead group. Buildings should be structurally sound and capable of conversion without complete or substantial reconstruction, and a structural survey may be required. Proposals for such changes of use will therefore only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, and the Local Planning Authority will require the applicant to submit a statement demonstrating the efforts which have been undertaken to find an alternative use for the building prior to the submission of the application. Acceptable alternative uses include employment activities such as light industry, and community uses.

Policy CN7

6.12

The Local Planning Authority is committed to the conservation of the District's heritage and has powers under the Planning Acts to take steps to secure the repair of neglected buildings, and to prosecute and enforce against unauthorised alterations, extensions and demolitions. Advice on listed building matters is freely available from the District Council's Conservation Officer, who will be pleased to discuss draft proposals. The Local Planning Authority also has powers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to grant aid specialist repairs to listed buildings, and advice on possible grants may also be obtained from the Conservation Officer.

Conservation Areas

6.13

The District is notable for the quality of its built environment and there are many areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Such areas can be designated as Conservation Areas. There are now 69 Conservation Areas in the District, ranging from Salisbury City centre to villages and hamlets, with over half of these designated since 1989. A list of the Conservation Areas within the District appears as Appendix II to this document. The Local Planning Authority is currently carrying out a re-appraisal of all the Conservation Areas, and complete details on the individual areas will be available to the public in the future as the work is completed. An advisory leaflet on Conservation Areas is available from the Planning Office.

6.14

In order to protect the special character and appearance of these Conservation Areas, there is a need for tighter than usual control over development. Designation of a Conservation Area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but it is expected to be of a standard high enough to maintain or enhance the quality of the Conservation Area, be sensitive to its character and appearance, and be in accordance with other relevant policies in this plan.

Policy CN8

6.15

Within a Conservation Area formal approval is normally required for demolition or partial demolition of any building. Proposals involving demolition within a Conservation Area will normally be refused unless it can be shown that the features to be removed make no positive contribution to the character of the area, or are detrimental to it or that there are overriding highway, or other safety reasons. Where proposals are acceptable in principle but demolition would create a gap in the street scene, a detailed application in respect of a replacement building or structure will normally be required, to run concurrently with the application for Conservation Area Consent. No demolition will be allowed to proceed until this has been approved. The opportunity for recording details of structures prior to their demolition will be taken.

Policy CN9

6.16

Outline applications submitted for sites within Conservation Areas are usually insufficient to provide all the necessary information in respect of new development. The importance of good design and attention to detail in such sensitive areas dictates that the submission of detailed planning applications will be required for development proposals affecting Conservation Areas. Where an outline application is submitted, the Local Planning Authority will normally invoke Article 7(2), of the Town and Country Planning Development Order 1988 (as amended) and require details of the proposed development to be submitted.

6.17

The character of areas of high environmental quality can be eroded by unsympathetic alterations to individual properties. On unlisted buildings such alterations often do not require planning permission and normally are within the scope of "Permitted Development". Where the character of an area is threatened by such alteration, the Local Planning Authority may seek the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment to a

direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 (as amended). This has the effect of taking away certain specified "Permitted Development" rights within a defined area, so that a planning application would have to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in respect of the proposed alterations.

6.18

Open spaces, fields, breaks between buildings and gardens also often contribute in a very marked way to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The development of such spaces will not be permitted. Care should be taken to ensure that views into and out of Conservation Areas remain unspoilt and opportunities should be taken to improve views that do not contribute to the character of the area.

Policies CN10 & CN11

6.19

The Local Planning Authority has a duty to enhance Conservation Areas, and improvements to the quality of such areas through removal of unsightly elements, which may include signs, buildings, advertisements, wiring or other features, are a part of this enhancement process.

Policy CN12

Shopfronts and Signs in Conservation Areas

6.20

Shopfronts have an important impact on the street scene and influence the quality of the environment. Pressures to change shopfronts arise due to changes in occupiers, retailing methods, renovation and the application of corporate images. It is important that historic examples are retained or restored, and that new shopfronts are of a sensitive design. Plastic or gloss finishes, large size and garish colour schemes and large areas of glass should be avoided. Proposals in respect of listed buildings are assessed in relation to each building's age and special character. On unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, the design of new shopfronts should be tailored not only to the building's characteristic features, but also to surrounding shopfront design. The Council has produced a leaflet 'Shopfront Design in Salisbury' which provides additional guidance on this topic.

Policies CN13 & CN14

6.21

Advertising is also an important feature which can create great colour and interest, contributing to the attractiveness of the street scene. However, if

advertisements are poorly located or out of character they can detract from its appearance. It is important that the design, scale and materials of any fascias or projecting signs on commercial buildings are sympathetic to the Conservation Area. Traditional materials will be encouraged, together with traditional detailing where appropriate. Within Conservation Areas, internal illumination of fascias, projecting box or hanging signs, will usually be inappropriate. The Local Planning Authority will consider the impact of the external illumination of signs to ensure that the lighting is unobtrusive both on the building and in the wider area. Action will be taken to remove unauthorised signs. The Local Planning Authority will also consider applications for signs or advertisements against the criteria set out in policy G11 where appropriate.

Policy CN15

Shopfront Grilles

6.22

Effective security measures are often required for shops and business premises. However, inserting security shutters or grilles, complete with associated boxes and tracks, into shopfronts can detract from and irreparably alter their character, and create an undesirable precedent for neighbouring shops. Planning permission is required for the material alteration or replacement of a shopfront, or for erecting permanent security shutters on the external face of an existing shopfront.

6.23

External grilles will not be allowed on listed buildings, and only in exceptional circumstances will they be allowed in Conservation Areas due to their impact on the visual amenity of the area. In cases where external grilles appear to be the only viable solution on certain shops in Conservation Areas, they should preferably be of the demountable type, padlocked into position when in use and applied directly to each window. Roller grilles should have spindle boxes recessed behind the fascia board or, if not practicable, clad or adapted to make them as unobtrusive as possible, with dark painted grilles covering the display area only, and not the pilasters or fascia. Additional information on this issue is contained in the District Council's leaflet "Shopfront Design in Salisbury". Guidance relating to shopfront design for other settlements in the District will be produced.

Policy CN16

Trees

6.24

Trees are a major contributor to the character and appearance of many parts of the Local Plan area. The felling of trees is under the general control of the Forestry Authority and, dependent upon whether or not a Tree Preservation Order is in force or trees are protected by virtue of their position in a Conservation Area, it may be necessary to apply for a licence before felling takes place. A felling licence is required for relatively low volumes of timber and can apply to trees outside of woodlands. There are exceptions to the need to apply for a felling licence which are set out in the Forestry Act 1968 and Regulations. The Forestry Authority's Regional Conservancy can supply full details. Certain trees both individually and as groups are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Elsewhere, trees within Conservation Areas are also protected, with certain exceptions. Six weeks' notice must be given to the Local Planning Authority before trees are lopped, topped or felled. This requirement enables the authority to make a Tree Preservation Order if it considers that the trees make a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.25

The intended felling of trees which are considered dead, dying or dangerous must still be notified. Where permission is given for the felling of a tree which is covered by a Tree Preservation Order, or is located in a Conservation Area, the approval will normally be accompanied by a requirement for the planting of at least one replacement of a species and size appropriate to the locality.

6.26

The Local Planning Authority is concerned about the continuing loss of amenity trees throughout the District. For its own part, the authority will continue to plant trees as part of its environmental enhancement programme and has, in addition, established a budget specifically for the purpose of planting new trees and replacing existing trees that are nearing the end of their lives.

Policy CN17

Historic Parks and Gardens

6.27

English Heritage has compiled a Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, to draw attention to the importance of these as an essential part of the nation's heritage. Additional sites may come forward in the review process which has commenced. The gardens have been graded using the same I, II* and II symbols as for listed

buildings, but at present, unlike historic buildings, 'listed' status does not provide any form of statutory protection. The gradings have been allocated according to the historic layout, features and architectural ornament of the park or garden. Seventeen historic parks and gardens within the Local Plan area are included within the Register and a list of these is contained in Appendix II to this document.

6.28

The Local Planning Authority will encourage the conservation, restoration and maintenance of historic parks and gardens, whether listed or otherwise. Where they are associated with development proposals, developers will be required to safeguard the landscape setting, and ensure the retention, management and, where appropriate, the restoration of surrounding gardens or parkland. Developers may be requested to enter into legal agreements in this respect.

Policy CN18

6.29

Advice on matters affecting historic parks and gardens may be obtained from English Heritage or from the Wiltshire Gardens Trust, a County-based body concerned with conserving historic parks and gardens.

Environmental Enhancement

6.30

The Local Planning Authority undertakes a programme of environmental enhancement both in Salisbury and in towns and villages throughout the District in association with the relevant Town or Parish Council. A leaflet giving full details of the Environmental Enhancement Scheme is available from the Planning Office. It regards its commitment to environmental enhancement as necessary and appropriate given the quality of the District as a whole and the national and international standing of Salisbury. Enhancement is also considered to be an important feature of Conservation Areas and action should be taken where possible to improve their appearance. Enhancement and Historic Buildings Grants may be available for such purposes from the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority will also seek environmental enhancement in association with development proposals where appropriate.

Policy CN19

Ancient Monuments and Archaeology

6.31

The District is rich in historical and archaeological features including barrows, hillforts, field systems and water meadows. Some of these are considered to be of national importance and are scheduled as Ancient Monuments. The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage) is currently undertaking a major re-survey of archaeological sites with a view to increasing the number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Scheduled Ancient Monuments enjoy statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979, and developments likely to affect them require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The desirability of preserving a monument and its setting is a material consideration when considering development proposals.

Policy CN20

6.32

Many historic and archaeological features do not have any form of statutory protection and are under threat from the various pressures of development, agriculture, forestry and tourism. For this reason, a number of Areas of Special Archaeological Significance have been defined in the Proposals Map. These areas of high archaeological interest are largely rural and some cover extensive tracts of countryside, and contain, for example, whole barrow groups, settlements and sub-surface features. Due to the richness of the District's historic environment, the designation covers the majority of the plan area. The purpose of the Areas of Special Archaeological Significance is to preserve for posterity these areas of high archaeological interest and their definition is the means whereby a selective approach to preservation will be achieved, using existing legislation and the voluntary co-operation of landowners and farmers. The value of these areas lies in the preservation of a segment of ancient landscape of settlement form and the resultant cluster of associated features. Development proposals, including forestry schemes, which would adversely affect these ancient landscapes will generally not be allowed.

6.33

Policies CN20-CN23 seek to preserve features of archaeological interest and, in appropriate circumstances, are intended to exploit opportunities which may be presented for archaeological investigation or the safeguarding of important evidence which might otherwise be destroyed without record as a result of development. The Local Planning Authority is guided in its approach to archaeology by the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: "Archaeology and Planning", and will seek the advice

of the County Archaeologist. Prospective developers are encouraged to refer to this document and consult the County Archaeologist prior to the submission of any planning application. The County Archaeology Service is now able to provide information to prospective applicants on where there are areas of archaeological interest in the District. It should be noted that the allocations for employment, housing, infill, or other developments do not obviate the need to follow procedures laid down in PPG16. Where the fabric or setting of known archaeological monuments, whether scheduled or not, would be adversely affected by permitted development, the Local Planning Authority may use its powers to control such works by an Article 4 Direction.

6.34

When considering proposals which may affect archaeological sites, the Council will ensure that a procedure is followed which both protects the site and its setting and arrives at a reasonable and informed decision. The Local Plan area contains a wealth of archaeological features, many of which have not been investigated, or are as yet undiscovered. Where such remains are thought to exist either as a result of consultation with the County Archaeologist, or through research initiated by a prospective developer, there will be a requirement for site evaluation prior to the determining of any application. In many instances a site may accrue archaeological potential by its proximity to known archaeological monuments, its setting with the landscape, or by the recorded presence of archaeological artefacts from within the site. In such instances, where the site has a clear archaeological potential, but little recorded information, an evaluation, including where necessary excavation work, would need to be undertaken to establish the presence and extent of archaeological deposits and explore the site's potential. This is usually a rapid and inexpensive operation involving ground survey and small-scale trial trenching, but it should be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or archaeologist. Evaluations are designed to help define the character and extent of any archaeological remains that exist in the area, and thus indicate the weight which ought to be attached to their preservation. In appropriate circumstances the evaluation can comprise a desk top study. Where the results of such a study show that there is no potential for finding any archaeological remains, no fieldwork will be necessary. There will be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in situ of nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not. However, where the preservation of remains in situ is not justified, developers should be willing to enter into a voluntary agreement to undertake the satisfactory excavation and recording of

remains including the publication of the results. In the event of developers not wishing to enter into such an agreement, planning permission, if granted, will be subject to a condition that the development should not proceed in the area of archaeological interest until required archaeological works have been implemented, as PPG16 recommends. Conditions may also be placed on developments to allow observation and recording during the early stages of development.

Policies CN21 & CN22

6.35

The emphasis is placed on negotiations being held at an early stage so that integrated programmes of work can be agreed. This is particularly important in the historic settlements identified in CN23 as these areas have a wealth of known archaeological interest and a high potential for the discovery of further archaeological remains. Therefore, where development proposals come forward in these settlements, the Local Planning Authority will expect the archaeological implications of the development to be established prior to the determination of the application, and the opportunity for appropriate archaeological site investigations to be provided.

Policy CN23

6.36

Developers should make provision for investigating and protecting new sites as yet undiscovered. The County Archaeologist will continue to be informed of planning applications submitted within the District. The Local Planning Authority is aware of the potential for new sites to be discovered, and it is hoped that the policies of the Local Plan will minimise the late discovery of important archaeological remains once development is in progress.

Stonehenge World Heritage Site

6.37

Stonehenge, a World Heritage Site, lies in the north of the District, two miles to the west of Amesbury. The World Heritage Convention, originally formulated by UNESCO, has the duty to draw up a list of World Heritage Sites which member states pledge to protect and give practical support to conservation projects at threatened sites. In recognition of the outstanding importance of the Stonehenge complex of monuments, the first seven sites in the United Kingdom to be entered on the list, in 1987, included "Stonehenge, Avebury and associated sites". The defined World Heritage

Site is made on the basis of two separate sites, one based on Stonehenge, and the other on the Avebury complex within Kennet District.

6.38

Sites selected for inclusion in the World Heritage List are considered to be representative of historic sites and landscapes which are essential to a proper understanding of man's history in all parts of the world. They illustrate, with an international dimension, the influence of ideas, environment, economy and geography in shaping the evolution of peoples and nations. They also have worldwide relevance and importance. Stonehenge has long been regarded as the most evolved and architecturally complex stone circle of Neolithic and early Bronze Age Britain. The World Heritage Convention listing confirms and furthers the archaeological importance of the Stonehenge complex on an international scale. This is a most relevant factor to be taken account of in the Local Plan and is a material consideration within the World Heritage Site when planning and listed building consent applications are determined. The Government is to prepare a management plan for the World Heritage Site and the District Council supports the production of such a plan.

Policy CN24

6.39

There are additional restrictions on development in the vicinity of Stonehenge in order to protect the landscape setting of the monument and the archaeological importance of the surrounding land. Permitted development rights relating to agricultural and forestry operations within an area of seven and a half square miles around Stonehenge have been withdrawn since 1962 by a Direction under Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1950 (now Article 4 of the 1988 Order). Consideration will be given to extending the Article 4 Direction to cover the entire World Heritage Site.