

Managing
Change
in the Historic
Environment

Extensions



Consultation draft
August 2009

Key Issues

- 1. Most listed buildings can be extended sensitively.**
- 2. Extensions should:**
 - **protect the character and appearance of the building;**
 - **be subordinate in scale and form;**
 - **be located on a secondary elevation;**
 - **be designed in a high-quality manner using appropriate materials.**
- 3. Local authorities give advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent and other permissions.**

INTRODUCTION

This is one of a series of guidance notes on managing change in the historic environment. The series explains how to apply the policies contained in the *Scottish Historic Environment Policy* ([SHEP](#), PDF 312K) and *Scottish Planning Policy 23: Planning and the Historic Environment* ([SPP23](#), PDF 192K).

This note sets out the principles that apply to the extension of listed buildings. It replaces the equivalent guidance in *The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas* (1998) and should be afforded equal weight in drawing up planning policies and determining applications relating to the historic environment.

Monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent for any works. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Scotland's website: [Scheduled Monuments: Guidance for Owners, Occupiers & Land Managers](#) (PDF 718K).

ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The history of use and ownership of a historic building is reflected in the cumulative changes made to it. They can themselves form an aspect of a building's special interest. New alterations or additions, which are of high design quality sympathetic to the character of the building, form part of this continuum. Most listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses.

Yet historic buildings vary in the extent to which they can accommodate change without loss to special interest. Some present the opportunity to promote design intervention that would not have been possible without the historic building as a creative spark. Others are sensitive even to slight alterations. This is especially so of buildings with important interiors - not just great houses, but also, for example, churches with historic pews or factories with surviving machinery. Then an extension rather than internal change may be a way to safeguard the special interest of the building.

Some buildings have interest as relatively little-altered examples of a humble building type. These are harder to sympathetically extend than many more substantial pieces of architecture (see small buildings, below).

Scheduled monuments are not expected to adapt to new uses so the case for an addition to one of these must rest on the conservation needs of the monument alone.



Esk Net Mills, Musselburgh in 1996 before refurbishment and extension.



The extension to Esk Net Mills, Musselburgh, East Lothian. The glass extension of 2006 makes a deferential contrast to the solid masonry of the surrounding courtyard buildings of the 19th-century net-making complex. The design draws on the symmetry and scale of the old buildings, whilst creating a distinctive new component in its form and materials.



A complementary addition to a 19th-century country house in the Scottish Borders in which brick takes its cue from walled gardens.



Restoration and replication: Ca D'Oro, Union Street, Glasgow. Designed by John Honeyman in 1872 in the style of a Venetian palazzo, this former furniture warehouse was extended by two replica bays (right-hand side of image) in 1989 and the roof was restored to its original profile.



Complementary: Stanley Mills, Perth and Kinross. A new lift tower was added to East Mill that echoes a semicircular stair tower on nearby Mid Mill. The location had been scarred by an earlier lift and rudimentary toilets. A glass strip separates the new-build from the historic masonry.



Complementary: Dundas Home Farm, South Queensferry, an 1881 steading converted and extended for residential use from 2001 to 2006. Here a new range takes its cue from the scale and rhythm of the original. © Simpson & Brown Architects.

CONTEXTUAL DESIGN

New work must acknowledge the old in every case, whether that work will be:

- a restoration or
- a replication or
- a complementary addition, or
- a deferential contrast or
- an assertive contrast

Restoration

A building may have lost its original form, and a well-documented reconstruction of a missing element may be proposed. The original frontage to a building may have become partially or completely hidden behind later extensions. The appearance of the building and its setting could be improved by their removal and the restoration of the facade. Planning authorities will often seek to promote restoration, provided there is sound evidence on which to base the work. Where an extension has architectural merit in its own right, or has through time become part of the character and interest of the building, it should be retained.

Replication

Replication is where new work is designed specifically to match the original building and does so in all respects, not only in the use of the same materials in the same style. The dimensions and finish of the materials used and details such as coursing, pointing, tooling, window proportion and profile, roof pitch and slate must all be accurately modelled upon the existing building or they will not sit comfortably beside the original. But in evoking a period an extension must not masquerade as being of that period so a fine line must be defined. Where building standards apply, exact replication may not be practicable.

For this reason it is often best to avoid a pseudo-historical design which would deny the historical and the contemporary alike. One historical viewpoint should not supplant others, as history must remain readable, and continuity of culture through quality interventions is the ultimate goal.

Complementary additions

Complementary new work takes as design cues the profile, massing, bay rhythm, scale and proportion of the existing, but without replication of the details.

Quite substantial additions can be made to some buildings without detracting from the character of the original work. The same added to other buildings would result in imbalanced design or a straggling composition. In those cases, a well-designed modern addition that will not read as part of the original building will less radically affect its appearance.

Deferential contrast

Deferential contrast is where the new becomes a self-effacing backdrop against the old. Even if it is large, it seeks not to be assertive. It might be achieved by reflective glass, for example.

Assertive contrast

Assertive contrast means affirmation of the new as more or less equal partner to the old. New and old combined should be of greater lasting value than either on its own. This demands higher-quality new work than would often be found in an isolated new building. The presence of the existing building 'raises the game' for the new build.

EXTENSIONS TO THE GROUND PLAN

It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules for new work when much will depend upon the site, the landscape, the scale and form both of the existing building and of the addition or extension proposed. The following basic rules will, however, apply.

- An addition or extension should play a subordinate role. It should not dominate the original building as a result of its scale, materials or location, and should not overlay principal elevations.
- Where an extension is built beside a principal elevation it should generally be lower than, and set back behind, that facade.
- However, if it would unbalance a symmetrical elevation this would threaten the original design concept.
- An extension which is modestly scaled, skilfully sited so as not to affect the overall architectural composition and built to complement the materials and detailing of the original property may well be accepted.
- Fire escape routes may be internal wherever space can be created without damaging important interior work. Where an external escape stair is necessary, it should be located as reversibly and inconspicuously as possible, and not on principal elevations.
- Rear extensions may impact upon adjoining historic buildings or on more distant views that should also be assessed before they are assumed to be appropriate.
- Archaeology and the layout of lang rigs, important features of the historic fabric of some older towns, should be respected in any new development.
- Skilful landscaping can reduce the visual impact of major new work but does not exempt good building design.

SMALL BUILDINGS

Small buildings such as tollhouses and lodges present challenges of scale but may need extension to give them purpose. One way to maintain the visual integrity of the original building may be to construct a lower link block, perhaps in glass, between it and the extension. Very small structures such as garden buildings not intended for permanent occupation will seldom be capable of extension. A proven need for



Former Arctic Tannery and Harbour Workshops, Dundee. A fire destroyed the upper part that had originally been of timber louvres to cure sealskin hides, replaced in brick. The development of housing (below) echoes in a new form the timber and brick previously used here.



Deferential contrast: Harbour Workshops, Dundee, following redevelopment as housing in 2008.



Assertive contrast: the rear extension of the former India of Inchinnan Tyre Factory (1930). The aerodynamic curve reflects earlier use of the site to make aircraft and dirigibles.



An extension to a house in a conservation area, set back from the front elevation, of glass and timber that echoes conservatories in the area.



Fairfield House, Dalkeith, built for an iron founder. The cast-iron vine house on the right was repaired as part of the development as offices for Midlothian Council. The house is still the focal point although smaller than the new-build addition. The pink building is the rear of a separate structure. © Royal Fine Art Commission. Licensor www.scran.ac.uk.



Former nurses' home of 1938–47, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh. The additional rooftop storey is set back from the wallheads, minimising its impact on the original design.

additional accommodation might instead be met by a new free-standing suitably scaled and designed structure, nearby or elsewhere. A condition might be set to phase the new work after the repair or restoration of the small building.

ROOF EXTENSIONS

A planning authority will consider the special interest of the existing roof, the visibility of the extension in views, and take into consideration the amenity of adjacent buildings.

Special interest

Where the external form is significant to the character of the building, or where the internal structure and decoration has historic interest, a roof extension will not be appropriate that destroys this or requires such a high degree of new supporting structure that only the facades of the historic building remain.

Visibility

A roof extension may not comfortably fit where long views are important to the profile of a building. Where streets are narrow and buildings are tall, the visual impact to pedestrians in the street of a roof extension will be less.

Amenity

Where developments go ever skyward, amenity may suffer at lower levels and harm the future prospects of historic buildings. Plot ratios seek to minimise this. One or two new 'icons' should not be taken to have established a datum line to which all adjacent developments should aspire. To do so would rapidly eliminate the impact of the 'icon'.

BUILDING STANDARDS

Rather than force the existing building to adapt to meet modern requirements, the new extension will normally be the place to provide:

- accessibility to existing floor levels through lifts and ramps (see accessibility guidance in this series)
- new services that might be difficult to route through the existing building
- high thermal performance
- fire separation
- rainwater collection and disposal (consider Sustainable Drainage Systems - SUDS)
- independent foundations that do not compromise the foundations of the existing building

Many historic buildings are capable of receiving an alteration that is of its time, respects and defers to what has gone before, and may be justified as supporting the continued conservation and use of that building. A Design and Access Statement, if required, should bring

this out within these guidelines and with reference to a statement of significance or conservation plan specific to the building.

CONSENTS

Consent is required for any work to a listed building which affects its character. The local authority determines the need for consent.

Where listed building consent is required, an application is made to the local authority. This should include accurate scale drawings showing both the existing situation and proposed works in context. It is normally helpful to provide detailed technical information and photographs.



Kilncraigs Business Centre, Alloa. Above: cast-iron columns are retained internally behind the glazed curtain wall constructed in 2000.

Below: A 19th-century woollen yarn store was skilfully extended in contrasting concrete and steel (left-hand side of photo) in 1938 by William Kerr. Most of the very deep original but multi-phase block (right-hand side of photo) was cut back and a new curtain wall added to the existing structure in 2000, making an assertive but revealing contrast of new and old, and achieving a visual link between Alloa Tower and the town. Junctions are clearly formed in red and white.



Other selected Historic Scotland publications and links

[Guide for Practitioners 6: Conversion of Traditional Buildings](#) (2007) (Historic Scotland online shop: DVD available for purchase)

For the full range of Inform Guides, Practitioner Guides, Technical Advice Notes and Research Reports please see the Publications section of the Historic Scotland website.

Other selected publications

Scottish Government, [A Policy on Architecture for Scotland](#) (2001) (PDF 608K on Scottish Government website)

Scottish Government, [Building Our Legacy: Statement on Scotland's Architecture Policy](#) (2007) (Scottish Government website page)

Other selected contacts

Architecture & Design Scotland (A+DS)

(non-departmental body established to champion good architecture, design and planning in the built environment)

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Details of all individual scheduled monuments, listed buildings, designated gardens and designed landscapes, and designated wrecks can be obtained from Historic Scotland (see contact details below) or at: www.pastmap.org.uk. Details of listed buildings can also be obtained from the relevant local authority for the area.

Advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent, building warrants, and other permissions/consents should be sought from local authorities.

Historic Scotland Inspectorate
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
EDINBURGH
EH9 1SH

Tel: 0131 668 8981 or 8717 Fax: 0131 668 8765
E-mail: hs.inspectorate@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Web: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Advice on technical issues is available from Historic Scotland's Technical Conservation Group at the above address and website or at the following:

Tel: 0131 668 8715 or Fax: 0131 668 8669
E-mail: hs.technicalconservationgroup@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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Cover images

Beach Shelter (1934), Broughty Ferry Esplanade, City of Dundee, extended and refurbished in 2005.

Castlemilk Stables (circa 1800), Glasgow, were converted in 2003–7 for the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, requiring a glazed extension into the courtyard to give reception and circulation space to the narrow stable buildings around the perimeter of a square.

Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney, refurbished and extended in 2007. The scale and massing of the extension complements the adjacent traditional waterfront buildings that provide the conservation area with much of its character.