

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| APPENDIX 5: New work in conservation areas .....                           | 3  |
| Introduction .....   | 3  |
| Who is response? .....   | 3  |
| <i>New buildings in conservation areas</i> .....                           | 5  |
| New buildings on vacant sites or in the grounds of existing buildings..... | 5  |
| New building as extensions to existing buildings .....                     | 8  |
| New buildings as replacements to existing buildings .....                  | 8  |
| Making changes in conservation areas .....                                 | 10 |
| Making changes to the outside appearance of existing buildings .....       | 10 |
| Making changes to frontage areas and boundary structures .....             | 11 |
| Making changes to intensify or alter the use of existing buildings.....    | 11 |
| Considering detail in conservation areas.....                              | 12 |
| The characteristics of siting and alignment.....                           | 14 |
| The characteristics of materials .....                                     | 16 |
| The characteristics of scale and form .....                                | 19 |
| The characteristics of style and detailing .....                           | 20 |

### Table of figures

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Before (left) and after (right) restoration.....  | 4  |
| Figure 2: Plymouth City Centre .....  | 6  |
| Figure 3: Examples where open space is a positive contributor to an area's special interest and character. ....                                   | 6  |
| Figure 4: Plymouth Hoe Registered Park and Garden within the Hoe Conservation Area. ....  | 7  |
| Figure 5: Examples of new buildings in conservation areas making a positive contribution to setting.....  | 9  |
| Figure 6: Before (left) and after (right) photos of the impact of unsympathetic changes on an area's historical and architectural character ..... | 10 |
| Figure 7: The uniform treatment of the boundaries make a significant contribution to the character of the street. ....                            | 11 |
| Figure 8: Royal William Yard, Plymouth.....   | 12 |
| Figure 9: Examples of changes which can enhance the character of a street ....  | 13 |
| Figure 10: Examples of changes which can harm the character of a street.....  | 14 |
| Figure 11: Before (left) and after (right) example of redevelopment where siting was a key consideration.....                                     | 15 |
| Figure 12 Dense layouts, characteristic of historic urban areas.....  | 16 |
| Figure 13: This prominent slate cladding is attractive, but its use can be rare and needs to remain so to preserve its particular identity .....  | 18 |

Figure 14: Narrow cobbled roads and stone buildings are characteristic of Plymouth's historic Barbican area ..... 18

Figure 15: Renewing the render of this cottage was appropriate, but not the added patterning ..... 19

Figure 16: Examples of good siting and form.....20

Figure 17: The 'vernacular' style of these 17th century cottages derives mainly from the informality of their appearance.....21

Figure 18: The 'polite' style of this 19th century house derives from the formality of its architectural treatment which creates a dignified and refined appearance.22

Figure 19: The formal style of this building reflects its status as an important corner of the Abercrombie plan for Plymouth.....22

Figure 20: The new staircase linking the Royal William Yard to Devils Point successfully introduced a distinctly modern architectural style and materials to the historic victualling yard. Image © Jay Stone .....23

Figure 21: This small development is modern, but it is suited to its village setting, both in terms of its overall vernacular styling as well as the quality and subtle detailing of its parts. Note, for example, the softened corners to the rendered walls and the appearance of the roof with its traditional 'mitred' hips (right) in comparison to the existing tiled ones (left).....23

DRAFT

## **APPENDIX 5: New work in conservation areas**

### **Introduction**

1. Conservation areas are designated by LPA's and are special places due to the survival of their authentic architectural and historic qualities. They vary greatly in nature and character and in the features which have historical significance. This is particularly true of the conservation areas within the Plan Area as they cover a range of areas in different shapes and sizes, from the very rural to the very urban.
2. Within conservation areas, a sense of history as well as identity prevails, and by designating conservation areas the LPAs are sharing the belief that these areas ought to be preserved and reinforced.
3. The LPAs have a statutory duty to ensure that developments requiring planning permission in conservation areas are approved only if they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area's features of special architectural or historic interest. Policy DEV21 of the JLP sets out the LPA's approach to the historic environment and additional guidance on designated and non-designated heritage assets is available within this SPD.
4. Describing and defining the features in conservation areas are usually done through Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (CAAMPs). However, this is not always the case and, due to the number conservation areas across the Plan Area, a CAAMP may not have been produced for every conservation area. This guidance has been produced to explain what the features are in any of the conservation areas that demand such statutory respect and should be considered during the planning process.
5. Conservation areas are 'heritage assets' and all decisions made on planning applications affecting them will have to respond to whether the 'significance' of the asset would be impacted upon and whether the proposed impact is harmful.

### **Who is response?**

6. Everyone who makes decisions about how the built and natural environment in conservation areas are treated has a shared responsibility towards their care. They, in particular, hold the key to successfully achieving those statutory conservation aims. The challenge is to do what can be done to ensure this part of our heritage is handed on to future generations, intact and enhanced.
7. When permission isn't required to carry out works to non-listed buildings, like repairs and redecorations and the replacement of windows and doors, it will be for individual owners to decide whether or not their proposals are 'conservation friendly'. Regardless of size, for advice and assistance on any project which has a

structural or architectural impact within a conservation area, please contact the relevant LPA's Heritage Specialists/Officers.

8. For example, owners of the below unlisted house reversed its negative contribution to a conservation area by reinstating a solid timber panelled door and the vertical-sliding, single-glazed, painted timber sashes that had been previously removed.



*Figure 1: Before (left) and after (right) restoration*

9. When planning permission is required, the decision will be based on how well the works respect the features and characteristics described in this guidance and the CAAMPs. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their proposals will preserve or enhance the interest and character of the conservation area, showing respect for, and compatibility with, all that contributes in a positive sense towards their creation. This doesn't mean, however, that new buildings must copy their older neighbours in detail but their design should represent an imaginative and contemporary interpretation of the quality and qualities of the buildings and spaces around them, for example, in certain circumstances modern, contemporary designs may be appropriate.
10. Although conservation areas aren't designated to bring change to a halt, there will be times when particular proposals affecting particular buildings or sites will be inappropriate in principle, even if all aspects of their detailed design can be satisfactorily resolved.

### ***New buildings in conservation areas***

11. The below gives guidance for proposals which are introducing new buildings into conservation areas including:
- New buildings on vacant sites or in the grounds of existing buildings;
  - New building as extensions to existing buildings; and,
  - New buildings as replacements to existing buildings.

### **New buildings on vacant sites or in the grounds of existing buildings**

12. When new buildings are proposed for sites, the first consideration will be whether any part of the site, or indeed the site as a whole, should be built on at all. This is because the absence of buildings can itself be a positive contributor towards a conservation area's special interest and character.
13. An open and undeveloped site, for example, might evidence and visually 'characterise' an important aspect of an area's historic development pattern or its relationship with the surrounding landscape. Within settlements these special spaces include greens or commons, squares and market places, parks and gardens, allotments, quaysides and courtyards, the cultivated parts of ancient burgage plots, surviving apple orchards, the landscaped gardens of higher status houses and Plymouth City Centre Precinct. The last are somewhat different to the rest as their special interest isn't based on a total absence of buildings but on their density, which is characteristically low. In addition, such gardens sometimes evidence the development of English garden design, and can include any number of important specimen trees.
14. For example, wide open spaces are associated with the iconic Abercrombie design for Plymouth post-war city centre regeneration:



*Figure 2: Plymouth City Centre*

15. And in the images below, an apple orchard within a village (left) survives to a remarkable extent and are especially characteristic of its setting and the open field (right) preserves and characterises the commanding nature of the settlement's original siting in the landscape.



*Figure 3: Examples where open space is a positive contributor to an area's special interest and character.*

16. Outside settlements (and sometimes entering them too) such special spaces can include the adjacent fields of the open countryside. Although distinct from the settlement they often help to define its layout form (linear, nucleated, dispersed

etc.) and its relationship with the landscape setting. These spaces are more common around smaller rural settlements where twentieth century development hasn't encroached into the countryside, leaving them still confined, for example, to the floor or one side of a valley or to the crest of a ridge. In larger towns and cities, parks and green spaces often perform the same function.

17. An absence of buildings can also contribute positively when it permits views of important buildings or features, or indeed other undeveloped spaces that are special. These views needn't be confined to the conservation area itself and can also be from the outside in or the inside out; in other words from wherever the more significant features that contribute towards the area's interest, setting and character can be seen to advantage. These views can range from the tightly framed, as glimpsed between buildings, to the panoramic, as observed across a foreground of open land. Blocking these views completely would be undesirable, but even a partial block, or the introduction of new buildings into a scene, could be equally undesirable if this harmed an otherwise agreeable composition, visual effect or a setting with historic significance.



*Figure 4: Plymouth Hoe Registered Park and Garden within the Hoe Conservation Area.*

18. There are other conservation reasons why an absence of buildings from a site will be an important consideration when assessing its suitability for new buildings. The existence of important trees, landscaping features or archaeological remains are perhaps the more significant, and also the foreground or frontage of a building

where its open or uncluttered appearance is an essential aspect of its authentic character.

### **New building as extensions to existing buildings**

19. When a new building is proposed that will extend an existing one, two considerations are fundamental. The first is the same as above, which is whether all or part of the site chosen for the extension should be built on at all. Again this depends on what contribution the current 'absence of buildings' makes, and, whilst extensions are less likely to affect most of the 'open and undeveloped' spaces already listed, their impact on important views, trees, landscaping features and archaeological remains can be just as significant.
20. The second consideration is whether the existing building should be extended on the elevation proposed or extended. This is because a building's existing form can be essential to its character and setting. An absence of enclosed front porch extensions in a terrace of cottages, or side extensions in a series of semi-detached pairs are characteristics that preserve authenticity and create harmony. Where visible, the absence of extensions at the rear can do the same, as can their existence in a pattern and form that's repeated.
21. Where other types of buildings occupy a conservation area, such as farm buildings or warehouses, their characteristic forms and the desirability for preserving them, will influence their suitability for extension. This would be the case too with buildings such as toll houses and lodges which, although usually singular in their existence and style, add considerable interest to a conservation area, especially in their original form.

### **New buildings as replacements to existing buildings**

22. When a new building is proposed which involves the demolition of an existing building, the first consideration will be whether the demolition works should be undertaken. This is because the vast majority of buildings in conservation areas have been purposefully included in them on account of the positive contributions they make. The presumption for most buildings, therefore, is that they should not be demolished but retained with their interest and character preserved or reinforced.
23. The special qualities of historic buildings are often unique and derive mainly from their patina of age, their style and the idiosyncrasies and sensibilities of their construction and siting. Replicating these is rarely possible today as modern standards relating to the siting, servicing and construction of new buildings must be met. In addition, old buildings may possess other values that would be lost completely through demolition, such as being the work of a particular architect or estate, having associations with past events or people, or providing tangible evidence of how a settlement has developed.



24. The demolition and replacement of a building is likely to be acceptable, therefore, only if it's historic form and characteristics have been eroded by less than sympathetic, irreversible, changes. On the other hand, if a building isn't historic at all, and doesn't relate in any positive way to its historic neighbours, or the conservation areas as a whole, demolition may well be considered positively desirable. In this case the challenge will be to make sure the replacement is suited to its setting.
25. For example, the new buildings shown below were designed and sited to respect their different settings. The new rendered cottage range (left) is in a local village whilst the warehouse style apartment block (right) occupies a historic waterfront. The new development (below) also compliments the Grade 1 listed building at Devonport, Plymouth.



*Figure 5: Examples of new buildings in conservation areas making a positive contribution to setting*

### **Making changes in conservation areas**

26. The below gives guidance for proposals which are making changes to buildings within conservation areas including:

- Making changes to the outside appearance of existing buildings;
- Making changes to frontage areas and boundary structures; and,
- Making changes to intensify or alter the use of existing buildings.

### **Making changes to the outside appearance of existing buildings**

27. When changes to the outside of buildings are proposed in conservation areas, the first consideration will be whether the change should be made. This is because nearly every aspect of a building can create interest and character, from its overall form to the arrangement and detailing of its parts. Even minor changes can erode the positive contribution they make, and because most buildings are part of a group, their impact can be widespread and not just effect the building itself.

28. The changes which most erode interest and character are those that involve the loss of genuine authentic features, be they windows and doors, bargeboards and chimneys or the claddings and treatments of walls and roofs. Repair will preserve their originality and the building's integrity too, but if repair isn't practical, like-for-like replacement will minimise the loss. Replacements that aren't like-for-like can do significant damage if they introduce different designs or materials to the ones being lost, since their characteristics may not suit the building or the setting it's in. The unique identity it has, as well as its historic character, might both be eroded; and this would be true whether the changes replaced something existing or added something new.

29. For example, the below shows before and after photos of the impact replacements windows which are not like-for-like can have on a building's historic and architectural character. The new windows are painted timber, recessed in their wall openings, have glazing bars and have equally-sized, flush-fitting casements.



*Figure 6: Before (left) and after (right) photos of the impact of unsympathetic changes on an area's historical and architectural character*

### **Making changes to frontage areas and boundary structures**

30. When changes are proposed to the frontage areas of buildings, or to the treatment of their boundaries, the first consideration will be whether these should be made. This is because the way boundaries are formed, the line they follow, and the way the private area behind it is used and treated, can all contribute towards interest and character.
31. Different frontage and boundary treatments usually characterise particular periods in the development of settlements and, indeed, the status of the buildings they serve. They also create a whole range of positive visual effects, like enclosure and identity. By changing the use or appearance of the frontage area (for example, from garden or cobbles to tarmac for parking) or the boundary structure if there is one (for example, from ornamental railings to fence panels, or by removing or realigning any of its length) not only is this likely to erode the historic interest of a setting but its characteristics too, in what is the most prominent of locations.



*Figure 7: The uniform treatment of the boundaries make a significant contribution to the character of the street.*

### **Making changes to intensify or alter the use of existing buildings**

32. When proposals are made to change the use of a building, or alter and maybe extend it to continue an existing use, the first consideration will be whether these should be made. This is because particular uses may contribute towards the interest and character of a conservation area but they will only remain so for as long as they can be accommodated without causing harm.
33. Uses are rarely static in nature, and the time may come when a building is no longer capable of accommodating the evolving demands of even a long established use without major changes to its fabric and appearance. Where these will be damaging to an area's interest and character, relocation might be the more appropriate solution. Further, because it is not just the host building a use needs to be compatible with, but the host area as well, a proposal for a new use or the intensification of an existing one may not be appropriate where this would generate levels of traffic, parking, noise or any other environmental effects that could harm

the established character of a conservation area or prejudice its future preservation or enhancement.

34. The Royal William Yard in Plymouth is a good example of sensitive regeneration of historic buildings to accommodate new uses.



*Figure 8: Royal William Yard, Plymouth*

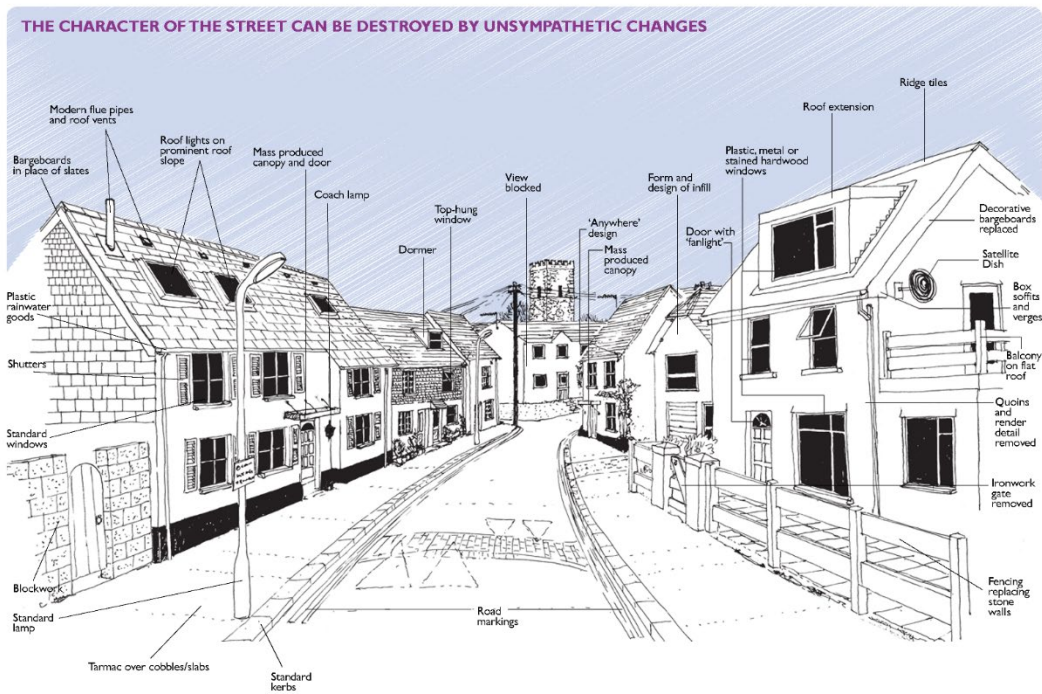
#### **Considering detail in conservation areas**

35. When proposals are fine in principle the real challenge is to make sure they're appropriate in detail too. Achieving this requires skill, as they're less likely to preserve interest and character, and strengthen identity, if they introduce characteristics that aren't already established. Attention to detail is therefore essential, first when analysing an area's existing characteristics, and then in translating them into proposals that are imaginative and contemporary and show a respectful eye for what's gone before.
36. The below diagrams show examples of both good and bad examples of how changes can enhance or destroy the character of a street:



Figure 9: Examples of changes which can enhance the character of a street

DRAFT



*Figure 10: Examples of changes which can harm the character of a street*

37. The below gives additional guidance on the detail which needs to be considered when proposing development in conservation areas including:

- The characteristics of siting and alignment;
- The characteristics of materials;
- The characteristics of scale and form; and,
- The characteristics of style and detailing.

**The characteristics of siting and alignment**

38. New buildings are more likely to look as if they belong to a conservation area if they're sited and arranged in much the same way as those already there. In recent years common practice has been to set new buildings back from the highway, with 'open plan' gardens or parking areas in front, but this isn't a pattern that's typical of historic areas in the area. Here, most buildings relate to the highway in one of three distinct ways, each telling something about their age, status and use:

- The first is where buildings are sited directly on the highway, at the back of the pavement if there is one or behind an 'unprotected' strip of land belonging to them. From roof to doorstep, therefore, their fronts are very much part of the street scene.
- The second is where buildings are set back from the highway behind private front gardens with waist high boundary walls. Although usually facing the

highway, the prominence of these buildings in the street scene will depend on the depth of the garden and how densely it is planted.

- The third is where buildings are set back from the highway within private gardens 'protected' by high level walls. As a result, these buildings, as well as their gardens, may not form part of the street scene at all.

39. The below example shows the sensitive combination of restoration and new build which has been placed to strengthen and enhance the characteristics of the village square.



*Figure 11: Before (left) and after (right) example of redevelopment where siting was a key consideration*

40. Buildings in groups often share a common frontage or 'building line' that's more or less parallel with the line of the highway, and, as few highways are ever dead straight, this relationship creates many pleasing and often unique visual effects. Building lines that diverge away from the highway are especially interesting as they may evidence a significant time or event in the past. Near the centre they might define an ancient market place, while at the crossing point of a river or stream they could evidence the existence of an earlier bridge or ford that has since been superseded.

41. Another important aspect of layout patterns is the relationship buildings have with one another along the highway, both in terms of their formations (singly, in pairs or in groups of any number) and the gaps between them. The variations are indeed enormous, and in most areas several patterns will exist. In cities, towns and large villages continuous terracing will often be dominant in and near the centre, while beyond this a number of other patterns will prevail, from short terraces or semi-detached houses in fairly regular series, right through to widely-spaced detached houses set in landscaped grounds. In small villages established patterns tend to be more mixed, and the key to their preservation rests very much in ensuring new development complements the mix in its particular locality.



*Figure 12 Dense layouts, characteristic of historic urban areas*

### **The characteristics of materials**

42. Over the centuries ideas about floor plan arrangements and architectural styles have spread with relative ease to produce similar forms and appearances throughout the country. Building materials, however, tell a different story. Transporting these was difficult and expensive so first choice usually went to the materials closest to hand. It is not surprising, therefore, that in a country with such a diverse geology, the materials used to construct its historic buildings are a prime source of local identity. This can be very local indeed where the geology is especially varied and able to supply a bounty of serviceable building stones, roofing slates and clays and shillees for cob. Farming practices helped too by supplying straw for thatch, and sometimes local reed from a number of wetland areas chiefly on the coast. In addition innumerable kilns alongside quarries, beaches and navigable rivers were busy producing lime; the essential ingredient for mortars and renders which were gauged with local beach or river sands. These, then, are the materials that truly belong in the area, having enjoyed a long tradition of use, while brick, tiles and exposed timber frame construction only rarely found favour.
43. Deciding what the most suitable materials are for a building project isn't simply a matter of making choices from the range that already exist. It is important to recognise which materials are present in a conservation area and which are not, but equally it is important to recognise how the materials that do exist are used, how extensive their use is, and how they are distributed. Each of these aspects is a potential source of interest as well as identity, bearing in mind that many conservation areas are made up of a series of identifiable zones each with



characteristics of their own. Slate hung walls, for example, might be conspicuous by their absence from certain parts of a conservation area, but be dominant in another or make only an occasional appearance. And when slate hanging does occur, it might only be applied to certain types of building, and even then, only to particular elevations.

44. Such patterns in the use and distribution of materials will usually have sense and purpose, so new work that doesn't respect them could erode their historic interest and may look out of place. Expensive slate hanging, for example, was often only applied to elevations that took the brunt of the weather, while houses built of rubble stone were often rendered to reflect their 'superior' status in comparison to 'humble' outbuildings whose stone was left exposed. It wouldn't make sense, therefore, if the house render was removed to expose the stonework and a new garage built alongside with a perfectly flat rendered finish.
45. Materials make an immense contribution towards the interest and character of conservation areas, not only in creating their distinctive identities, which is important enough, but also in creating a sense of authenticity that is genuine and meaningful. This is why the introduction of other materials, such as panel fencing in place of stone walls, plastic windows in place of timber, or indeed tarmac in place of cobbled pavements, can have such a disruptive and erosive impact. It is also why special care is always needed when specifying materials for new work. It is not enough to choose stone, for example, without considering its type and form (eg thin-bedded slate stone or rounded limestone), its colour, the texture and colour of its bedding mortar and the method of its laying and pointing. Nor is it enough to choose natural slates without considering their colour, their sizes, the way they're to be laid, and the method of their fixing.
46. The below examples show the importance of materials when making planning decisions in the conservation area:



*Figure 13: This prominent slate cladding is attractive, but its use can be rare and needs to remain so to preserve its particular identity*



*Figure 14: Narrow cobbled roads and stone buildings are characteristic of Plymouth's historic Barbican area*



*Figure 15: Renewing the render of this cottage was appropriate, but not the added patterning*

47. For further guidance on materials across the Plan Area please see APPENDIX 2: Specific materials for the Plan Area.

**The characteristics of scale and form**

48. Scale and form are two aspects of building design which are closely related and derive mainly from the attributes of size, shape and proportion. All buildings have them, as do their parts, and in combination they make a very significant contribution towards a conservation area's interest and character. In particular, the scale and form of buildings has quite a fundamental influence over the way a conservation area is perceived in terms of the kind of settlement it's in. In general the more similar buildings are in these respects the more likely they will relate to each other in harmonious ways.
49. In historic settlements such relationships tend to be the rule rather than the exception, mainly due to the prevalence of traditional materials and methods of construction. These have tended to keep buildings within certain bounds by restricting wall heights and limiting the widths between them to the distance a pitched roof could span (around 6 metres). So even the largest buildings in market towns have simple forms and modest, human scales. But, whilst visual harmony normally prevails in historic areas, the different ages and types of building in each will introduce distinctive patterns, so that roofs, for example, may be characterised by either steep or shallow pitches, or hipped or gabled ends.
50. For example, the new developments shown in both photographs are only a short distance apart, but the differences in their scale and proportions suit them to their different, well-established settings



*Figure 16: Examples of good siting and form*

51. Scale and form, however, do much more than illustrate the development and visual impact of traditional building techniques. Of very special interest is the way they shed light on a settlement's history, including its status and functions, its patterns of growth and the fluctuations of its fortunes. In comparison, therefore, to a handful of tiny cottages at the heart of a coastal hamlet, a row of 3-storey town houses in any market town will have a completely different story to tell about the whys and wherefores of their construction. Patterns of this kind characterise every historic settlement and provide a great deal of tangible evidence and information about former times. But it isn't simply for want of ensuring the story they tell can be read by future generations that they need to be respected. The great variety of visual effects they create are of value too, including every level of visual enclosure, and these could easily be harmed by the introduction of new buildings of inappropriate 'stature'.

#### **The characteristics of style and detailing**

52. The architectural style of historic buildings, and the detailing of their parts, create visual delight and together supply a tremendous amount of information about their age, status and occupation. They illustrate too how a conservation area has developed over the centuries, giving insight into how its fortunes have fared and what significant events have helped shape the way it looks today.
53. The style of most historic buildings is characterised, to a large extent, by the particular treatment of windows and doors. They, therefore, are especially sensitive to change, making any alterations to them undesirable.
54. As a general rule, the earlier historic buildings, the less likely their exteriors will have been consciously designed. An attractive appearance was doubtlessly sought, but practical considerations prevailed. So whilst room layouts were often the same in similar sorts of buildings, room sizes, and the size and arrangement of their windows, varied enormously to reflect the particular needs and aspirations of their occupants. The results, outside, were compositions most often described as picturesque and usually defined as 'vernacular' in style, their key characteristics being informality, irregularity and simplistic.

55. As the rule also implies, the later historic buildings are the more likely their exteriors will have been consciously designed. Formality is the key characteristic of their compositions, and for this they're usually defined as 'polite' in style. Buildings designed in this way usually embody classical traditions, so that the proportions of windows and doors, and their arrangement, combine to create regular patterns with vertical emphasis. Such 'politeness' outside was often at the expense of convenience inside, as achieving a balanced design was considered most important, especially on principle elevations. Such politeness also meant that architectural features of classical origin became common, particularly cornices at the eaves and pilasters in support. Indeed, these, along with essential sash windows, were often used to 're-front' vernacular buildings in order to bring them 'up to date' and into fashion. As the detailing of these features (especially sash windows) changed over time they now help to date buildings and the changes made to them. They also show how local craftsmen interpreted national ideas and used them to create buildings and places with distinctive characteristics of their own.
56. The architectural styles of buildings, the way they're distributed and the detailing of the features that characterise them are all significant contributors towards the interest and character of a conservation area. Above all, they provide that essential ingredient, 'authenticity', without which a conservation area would be without its true identity.
57. The below examples show how style and detailing plays a key role in defining conservation areas.



*Figure 17: The 'vernacular' style of these 17th century cottages derives mainly from the informality of their appearance*



*Figure 18: The 'polite' style of this 19th century house derives from the formality of its architectural treatment which creates a dignified and refined appearance*



*Figure 19: The formal style of this building reflects its status as an important corner of the Abercrombie plan for Plymouth*

58. Guarding against the erosion of vernacular characteristics means avoiding changes that will 'regularise' a building's appearance, like altering windows to a single, standard pattern or size. Taking care not to 'gentrify' simple cottage entrances is important too, while extensions should 'simply' continue the irregularities and informalities of their parent. Polite characteristics, on the other hand, are more likely to be eroded by repairs that don't include the renewal of decorative architectural features, or by extensions that are crudely detailed and disregard the key design features of their parent.

59. Recognising the different styles, and translating their characteristics into designs for new buildings, requires skill in the understanding and handling of traditional details if they are not to appear superficial and denigrate the 'genuine articles'. New buildings ought not be copies of the old. Rather they should display a purposeful relationship with their setting, and contribute positively towards its character, in a manner that's both imaginative and contemporary. Those qualified and experienced in architectural design will be best able to provide the professional advice and guidance needed and those with a proven record should be sought and commissioned.

60. Below are examples of new development which has introduced modern design into historic settings:



*Figure 20: The new staircase linking the Royal William Yard to Devils Point successfully introduced a distinctly modern architectural style and materials to the historic victualling yard. Image © Jay Stone*



*Figure 21: This small development is modern, but it is suited to its village setting, both in terms of its overall vernacular styling as well as the quality and subtle detailing of its parts. Note, for example, the softened corners to the rendered walls and the appearance of the roof with its traditional 'mitred' hips (right) in comparison to the existing tiled ones (left).*