

OTHER FACTORS

The condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use.

Any such assessment should be based on consistent and long-term assumptions. Less favourable levels of rents and yields cannot automatically be assumed for historic buildings. Also, they may offer proven technical performance, physical attractiveness and functional spaces that, in an age of rapid change, may outlast the short-lived and inflexible technical specifications that have sometimes shaped new developments. Any assessment should take account of the possibility of tax allowances and exemptions and of grants from public or charitable sources. In rare cases where it is clear that a building has been deliberately neglected in the hope of obtaining consent for demolition, less weight should be given to the costs of repair.

The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use.

The Secretary of State would not expect conservation area consent to be granted for the demolition of any building of merit unless the authority (or where appropriate the Secretary of State himself) is satisfied that real efforts have been made without success to continue the present use or to find compatible alternative uses for the building on the open market at a realistic price reflecting the building's condition (the offer of a lease only, or the imposition of restrictive covenants, would normally reduce the chances of finding a new use for the building).

The merits of alternative proposals for the site.

Whilst these are a material consideration, the Secretary of State takes the view that subjective claims for the architectural merits of replacement buildings should not in themselves be held to justify the demolition of buildings in conservation areas which are encompassed by these factors. Very exceptionally, there may be cases where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits to the community which have to be weighed against the argument in favour of preservation. Even here, it will often be feasible to incorporate existing buildings within new development, and this option should be carefully considered: the challenge presented by retaining existing buildings can be a stimulus to imaginative new design to accommodate them.

Where a building is considered to be a 'building of merit' (i.e. it falls into any one or more of the English Heritage Criteria set out on the reverse side of this leaflet and has not been unduly altered) and fails in terms of the three factors set out above, conservation area consent to demolish the building will normally be refused.

For further guidance, building owners, developers and agents are strongly advised to read the relevant sections of PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and the English Heritage publication 'Conservation Area Practice: English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas'.

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The aim of designating a conservation area is to preserve its special architectural or historic character or appearance. Many will include listed buildings to which special considerations and controls apply, but almost all will include unlisted buildings and in most the latter will predominate. The objective is to preserve the essential character of the conservation area, whilst allowing for its controlled change and evolution, rather than to 'pickle it in aspic'. The object of this guide is to make clear the criteria by which applications for the demolition of unlisted buildings and their replacement in a conservation area will be assessed.



English Heritage, in 'Conservation Area Practice: English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas' [October 1995], identify ten criteria by which the significance of an unlisted building in a conservation area should be judged. Harrogate Borough Council intends to adopt the English Heritage criteria in assessing applications for conservation area consent to demolish and for planning permission for replacement buildings. They are set out below (with emboldening by HBC), together with the Council's comments (in italics) in the context of the Harrogate District. Buildings which fall into any one of these criteria are described for convenience overleaf as 'buildings of merit'.

ENGLISH HERITAGE CRITERIA

(with Harrogate Borough Council comments in italics)

1. Is the building the work of a **particular architect of regional or local note**?

It is unlikely that it will be possible to identify an architect in the majority of cases unless planning, or more likely building control, records exist, though in some cases it may be possible to guess the identity of the architect on stylistic grounds.

2. Has the building qualities of **age, style, materials or other characteristics** which reflect at least those of a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?

These should be readily identifiable on an inspection of the area by anyone with a practised eye and some knowledge of architectural history.

3. Does the building relate by **age, materials** or in any other **historically significant way** to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?

Again, this should easily be appreciated by anyone with an eye for buildings, including most planners and architects. Building control records (where extant) may help to date some buildings.

4. Does it, individually or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the **gradual development of the settlement** in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?

In some cases this may be fairly obvious, in others a degree of research into the history and archaeology of the building and the area may be necessary. Again, building control records may help with dating.

5. Does it have a **significant historic association** with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or landscape feature?

This should be fairly easy to establish by reference to a map of the area and old maps may be particularly useful in this respect. In medieval urban settlements, such as Knaresborough and Ripon, burgage plots are likely to be a feature of the building layout. Town parks and landscape features are perhaps more likely to feature in the case of C18 and C19 developments.

6. Does the building have **landmark quality**, or **contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings**?

Landmark buildings (and monuments) are likely to feature in many conservation areas and will, by definition, be readily identifiable. Buildings set round a square or other open space, will have a symbiotic relationship with it, i.e. the space is likely to contribute to the setting of the building and vice versa. Obvious examples in Harrogate District are Knaresborough and Ripon Market Places, Crescent Gardens and The Stray.

7. Does it reflect the **traditional functional character** of, or **former uses** within, the area?

Examples are the former flax mills in Knaresborough, various buildings in Ripon associated with its former status as a Liberty, the Harrogate hotels or the former coaching inns on the Great North Road in Boroughbridge.

8. Has it **significant historic associations** with **local people or past events**?

In many cases, such buildings may be expected to be listed (for historic if not architectural reasons) but examples of unlisted buildings spring to mind, such as the house in Borrage Lane, Ripon, associated with the poet Wilfred Owen, or the house in Duchy Road, Harrogate, associated with the composer Gerald Finzi. Local historians may be of great assistance here.

9. Does its **use** contribute to the **character or appearance** of the conservation area?

Many conservation areas contain buildings which reflect the life and history of the community e.g. farms, schools, railway stations, etc. If these uses are no longer viable, then it is not normally possible to resist their change to new uses, but it is important to retain their character as links with the past.

10. If a **structure** associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a wall, terrace or minor garden building, is it of **identifiable importance to the historic design**?

Whilst most garden buildings of any significance are likely to be listed, obvious examples where this is not the case are the Sun Pavilion, Colonnades and Bandstand which are integral to the setting and design of the Valley Gardens. Examples may exist in other designed landscapes within the District.

If the building concerned meets **any** of the above criteria and has not been unduly altered, then the Council will have regard to Planning Policy Statement PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'.