

### Introduction

- 5.1 The Local Plan adopts an holistic definition of the historic environment, as all the physical evidence for past human activity, including archaeological monuments and remains, historic buildings, settlements, landscapes and spaces.
- 5.2 The main objective of these policies is to conserve the historic environment by ensuring that the essential character and special interest of its assets are protected or enhanced whenever development takes place.
- 5.3 The historic environment should not always be seen as a constraint to change, but as a catalyst for regeneration and diversification, bringing economic, cultural and educational benefits to the District. This Chapter includes policies to protect and enhance the historic environment of the District: its archaeology, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and historic buildings.

### Archaeology

- 5.4 The District has a rich archaeological resource including remains from prehistory to the military history of the last century. Archaeological remains provide important evidence of our past which brings an understanding and enjoyment of the present. The Local Plan follows Government guidance in ensuring that new development makes provision for the protection and understanding of this non-renewable resource, and recognises the cultural and educational benefits this brings to the District and its visitors.
- 5.5 The City Council maintains a Sites and Monuments Record (or Historic Environment Record) which identifies and records all known archaeological sites, monuments, historic buildings and landscape features in the District. Developers are advised to inspect this Record to establish any archaeological implications before considering detailed proposals, and developers are advised to seek advice from the City Council's

Archaeological officers at an early stage on the implications of proposals and requirements for archaeological investigation. All work required to assess, investigate and protect archaeological features should be carried out at the developer's expense.

- 5.6 Development which affects a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting will require consent from the Secretary of State, and developers are therefore advised to consult the Government's advisors English Heritage, before submitting detailed proposals.
- 5.7 The Local Plan recognises that special attention needs to be given to the rich and important archaeological remains in historic urban areas. The "Extensive Urban Surveys" for Wickham, New Alresford and Bishop's Waltham (Hampshire County Council & English Heritage, 1999), together with the "Winchester Urban Archaeological Strategy" (Winchester City Council & English Heritage, in progress) define historic urban areas where there is high potential for archaeological remains, together with advanced strategies for their management. It is likely that most development within these areas will be subject to Policies HE.1 and HE.2 below.

#### Policy HE.1

*Where important archaeological sites, monuments (whether above or below ground), historic buildings and landscape features, and their settings (as identified and recorded in the Sites & Monuments Record), whether scheduled or not, are affected by development proposals, permission will not be granted for development unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that, where appropriate, adequate provision has been made for their preservation in situ and ongoing management, conservation and protection.*

*Where such preservation is not possible or desirable, the Local Planning Authority will permit development to take place only where satisfactory provision has been*

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

*made for a programme of archaeological investigation, excavation and recording before, or during, development and for the subsequent publication of any findings, where appropriate.*

- 5.8 The requirement to preserve in situ the most important archaeological sites and their settings, in particular those recognised nationally, should be reflected in the design of development proposals. Appropriate arrangements for the future management of archaeological sites should be made to ensure their protection in the longer term.
- 5.9 Where archaeological investigation and recording provides the most appropriate means of taking account of less important archaeological sites, provision for this may need to be secured using planning obligations and/or conditions. The City Council may refuse permission for proposals which do not preserve in situ, or make provision for the protection or investigation of, archaeological sites.

### Policy HE.2

*Where there is evidence that archaeological sites, monuments (whether above or below ground), historic buildings and landscape features, and their settings may be present on a site, but their extent and importance is unknown, the Local Planning Authority will refuse applications which are not supported by adequate archaeological assessment which clarifies the importance of the feature and demonstrates the impact of development.*

- 5.10 It is vital to obtain the right information to make an informed decision and prevent the possibility of damage resulting from development. Where an archaeological assessment has been carried out, any planning application should include details of the results. In particular, it should show how the proposal would affect any archaeological sites and their settings, and how such effects could be satisfactorily mitigated.

### Historic Parks, Gardens and Battlefields

- 5.11 Important historic parks and gardens in the District are identified on a national register compiled by English Heritage, together with a more extensive register of locally important sites compiled by Hampshire County Council. Nationally important historic battlefields in the District are also identified on a register compiled by English Heritage. Developers will be responsible for ensuring that development proposals do not adversely affect the character of an historic park or garden or battlefield identified on these registers, either directly, or indirectly by an impact on its setting, disturbance by noise, or water pollution.

### Policy HE.3

*Proposals which would adversely affect the character or appearance of a park, garden or battlefield of special historic interest or its setting will not be permitted.*

- 5.12 Large-scale proposals affecting historic parks, gardens and battlefields or their settings will normally require a full environmental evaluation of their impact before they can be determined (e.g. golf centres and golf-related development, see Policy RT.12). Only proposals that avoid the loss of key features, retain the essential character of the site and assist its protection, management and restoration will generally be acceptable.

### Conservation Areas

- 5.13 Many settlements in the District provide visible evidence of their past in their buildings, street plans and open areas. These features contribute much to their attractive character. The Plan seeks to protect such features and to maintain and improve the quality of the historic environment.
- 5.14 The City Council has identified a number of areas within the District which are considered to be of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or

appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". These are designated as Conservation Areas. They may vary in character, form and size from a small group of buildings to a major part of a town, but their designation means that they are all worthy of protection as areas of particular merit.

5.15 The City Council has currently designated 37 Conservation Areas in the District (see Appendix 1). These areas will continue to be protected, with periodic reviews to assess the suitability of their boundaries and the need for new designations. To conserve features and areas of architectural, historic or archaeological interest, the Local Planning Authority will consider the designation of further, or extension of existing, Conservation Areas. In assessing an area for Conservation Area status the following factors will be taken into account:

- the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area;
- the level of architectural, historic or archaeological interest;
- the quality and special character of the area within its local context;
- the degree of threat to the character or appearance of the area;
- the amount of alteration and development, detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, that has occurred;
- other controls on development such as planning restrictions and other designations.

5.16 The Council has produced a number of Conservation Area Technical Assessments, along with a Conservation Strategy for Winchester Conservation Area. The Winchester Conservation Area Project has resulted in an environmental capital matrix to assist in the assessment of development proposals within the Winchester

Conservation Area and contains Supplementary Planning Guidance in the final Strategy Section. A series of Conservation Guidance Notes are being produced which set out the principles of conserving historic buildings and features which contribute to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Those already produced have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, but future documents produced will need to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.

### Development in Conservation Areas

5.17 The character of Conservation Areas depends on the relationship of buildings to each other and their settings, in the local and wider context. The first step in the design process must, therefore, be an appraisal of the qualities of the area and the opportunity to reflect and improve on them. Such an appraisal should be submitted as part of a planning application (see Policy DP.1).

#### Policy HE.4

*New development which would detract from the immediate or wider landscape setting of any part of a Conservation Area will not be permitted. Particular attention should be paid to conserving attractive views out of and into the area, including those from more distant/higher vantage points. Opportunities should be taken to improve views that detract from the appearance of the area.*

5.18 The topography of the District means that development is often seen from a distance or from above. The treatment of the roofscape is, therefore, a crucial element in the overall design. Other important aspects may include the openness of a view, and more obvious features, such as tree cover, and the immediate setting of particular buildings. The style of buildings can be important but, more often, it is the scale, massing and disposition of buildings which provides the predominant framework.

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 5.19 There has been a tendency for land to be subdivided as potential building plots, based upon suburban plot shapes. This often conflicts with the more traditional plan form of the District's historic towns and villages. In forming housing plots, account must be taken of the plan form best suited to the area. Otherwise insurmountable design problems will arise when producing a detailed design.
- 5.20 Government planning guidance (PPG3) stresses the importance of providing higher density housing on previously developed sites. Given that many of these sites will be in the historic environment, it is essential that, where new development is acceptable in principle, it responds sympathetically to the existing settlement pattern and townscape characteristics and is of sufficient quality design to make a positive contribution.
- 5.21 Proposals to extend an historic building require careful consideration and these must not detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Many historic properties in Conservation Areas are of a small and modest scale so it is important that the extension does not dominate the original structure. Views from surrounding listed buildings and other non street-level views may be important. Where an extension is acceptable in principle, a fine balance has normally to be struck between scale, location, design and materials.
- 5.22 Poorly conceived alterations to individual historic buildings can have a very damaging effect on the overall character and appearance of a Conservation Area. For example, the replacement of traditional doors, windows and roofing materials with modern equivalents or removal of boundary walls will soon erode the character of a street or village. However, where planning permission is required for alterations or where permitted development rights are removed by means of a Direction made under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, the Local Planning Authority can ensure that alterations to unlisted buildings

that contribute to the character of a Conservation Area are undertaken in a sensitive manner.

- 5.23 There are a number of principles of development that will apply when applications for development in Conservation Areas are considered.

### Policy HE.5

*Within Conservation Areas, development proposals which preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, and accord with other relevant Policies of this Plan, will be permitted, provided:*

#### **New Buildings**

- (i) respond sympathetically to the historic settlement pattern, plot sizes and plot widths, open spaces, townscape, trees and landscape features;*
- (ii) the height, massing, materials, plan form, roofscape and grouping of buildings are in scale and harmony with adjoining buildings and the area as a whole. The proportions of features and design details should relate well to each other and to adjoining buildings;*
- (iii) good quality building materials are used and these should be appropriate to the locality and sympathetic in colour, profile and texture;*
- (iv) walls, gates and fences are, as far as possible, of a kind traditionally used in the locality.*

#### **Extensions**

- (a) the character, scale and plan form of the original building are respected and the extension is subordinate to it and does not dominate principal elevations;*
- (b) appropriate materials and detailing are proposed and the extension would not result in the loss of features that contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.*

### **Alterations to buildings requiring planning permission**

- *the character of the existing building is respected and the changes do not result in the loss of original architectural features, traditional materials or townscape features that contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.*
- *where appropriate, the reinstatement of such features will be encouraged as part of a planning application, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.*

*Permission will not be granted for schemes which involve the erosion of character, such as the unsympathetic use of windows, doors or conservatories made of aluminium, uPVC or other non-traditional materials or the replacement of traditional roofing materials with inappropriate ones.*

- 5.24 In Conservation Areas, the detailed aspects of proposals are particularly important. In order properly to assess the full effects of a proposal, the submission of a full planning application will normally be required. Applicants are advised to hold informal discussions with the Planning Authority beforehand.
- 5.25 Applicants should supplement their proposals with sufficient information about the height and plan form of adjoining buildings to allow the impact to be tested, both in the immediate vicinity and in the wider context. For more significant schemes, sketches and drawings should be included to illustrate the three dimensional form. With regard to the impact of a proposed development on views into and out of a Conservation Area, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that there is not a detrimental effect.

### **Policy HE.6**

*Applications for development within a Conservation Area that do not provide sufficient detail, in addition to the*

*requirements of Policy DP.1, will not be permitted. Detailed plans and elevations showing the existing and proposed development, together with details of adjoining properties, particulars of materials, existing important local features, hedges and trees and proposed landscape treatment, (including measures to protect existing landscape and built features) will be required. A supporting Design Statement will be required which, in some cases, will require the impact of the scheme to be demonstrated, both in the immediate vicinity and the wider context.*

- 5.26 Within Conservation Areas, the demolition of most buildings and structures is subject to planning control through a mechanism known as Conservation Area Consent. In exercising this control the Local Planning Authority seeks to distinguish between those buildings which make a contribution to the area and those which are inappropriate and, indeed, may detract from it. The prime consideration is the contribution the particular building or structure makes to the architectural or historic interest of the area, and the effect demolition will have on its surroundings and the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 5.27 Where the building is inappropriate or fails to make any positive contribution, consent will normally be granted for demolition subject to agreeing a suitable redevelopment scheme. However, most buildings do make a positive contribution and the general presumption will be in favour of retention. Exceptional circumstances will, therefore, need to exist for the demolition of such a building to be permitted. Such circumstances would be where either the building is beyond repair and incapable of economic use, or the costs of bringing it into use are greater than the benefit of retaining it.
- 5.28 Sometimes buildings are acquired with a view to demolition and redevelopment or owners allow them to fall into disuse and neglect in the hope that they will get planning permission to redevelop a site. To discourage such practices on buildings

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

that make a positive contribution to a conservation area, the Local Planning Authority will require evidence that the property has been offered for sale for a reasonable time at a price that reflects its condition rather than the potential redevelopment value of a cleared site. In addition, the Local Planning Authority monitors historic buildings to assess whether they are at risk from neglect and decay and compiles a register of 'Buildings at Risk'. This not only includes listed buildings but may also include unlisted historic buildings. The Local Planning Authority has statutory powers to prevent the unnecessary loss of such buildings.

### Policy HE.7

*Within a Conservation Area, consent will only be granted for proposals involving total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings where the existing building:*

- (i) is of inappropriate structure or design where removal or replacement will preserve or enhance the area; or*
- (ii) makes no positive contribution to the character, appearance or historic interest of the area, either individually or as part of more general views within or from outside the Conservation Area; or*
- (iii) cannot be repaired or adapted so as to extend its useful life.*

*Conservation Area Consent will also normally be subject to planning permission being granted for the site's redevelopment. Consent will then be conditional on a contract for the approved development work being let prior to any demolition work being undertaken.*

5.29 When development takes place in a Conservation Area, it is important to retain the features that contribute to its essential character. However, the improvement or removal of other features may benefit the appearance of the area. The Local Planning Authority will encourage the removal or improvement of features which

detract from the appearance of a Conservation Area. These may include buildings, signs, advertisements or wires.

### Policy HE.8

*The Local Planning Authority will not permit development which fails to retain those essential features upon which the character of a Conservation Area depends. These features may include natural features, trees, hedges, walls, fences, open areas, ground surfaces and archaeological sites, as well as buildings and groups of buildings.*

### Shopfronts

5.30 Shopfronts have an important impact on the street scene in shopping areas. They particularly influence the quality of the environment in Conservation Areas. Whilst well designed shopfronts make a positive contribution to the appearance of a street, insensitive and obtrusive shopfronts spoil the character of an area. Shopfronts today are often regarded as transient features of a building. However, it is important that historic examples are retained or restored, and others are sensitively adapted to meet modern needs.

### Policy HE.9

*Proposals to remove or alter shopfronts which are appropriate to their location, of historical or architectural value, or which contribute to the character of the building or area, will only be permitted if they maintain or enhance the character of the area, or involve the restoration of original features that have been lost.*

5.31 Some of the older shopfronts in the District form part of listed or historic buildings. The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that, where appropriate, these features are retained. Consent is required for the removal of all or part of a shopfront in a listed building and, in certain cases, in Conservation Areas.

### Policy HE.10

*Where an existing shopfront is of insufficient quality to warrant retention, its replacement with one which preserves or enhances the character of the area, and is designed to relate closely to the overall character of the building, in terms of scale and style, will be permitted. New shopfronts should normally incorporate traditional elements and materials.*

- 5.32 The City Council has produced "Design Guidance for the Control of Shopfronts and Signs" in response to trends towards standardised shop design and the imposition of corporate identities, regardless of the building involved. This has been developed from guidelines produced by the English Historic Towns Forum, with the principles related specifically to the character of the District. It is principally aimed at new shopfronts in Conservation Areas, where the Planning Authority has greatest control, but is also applicable to shopfront design generally in the District.

#### Signs

- 5.33 In new buildings, it is important to consider the shopfront and signage early in the design. Regrettably, in many new schemes, the design of the shopfront and related signage is separate from the main design process. As a result, schemes are designed without proper thought being given to the design or overall composition. Insufficient space is left for the signing of the building, or the signs themselves become disruptive elements, conflicting with the style of buildings on which they are situated.

### Policy HE.11

*The Local Planning Authority will pay particular attention to the impact of advertisements before granting consent to display. Internally-illuminated signs, fascias and letters will not be permitted. Wherever possible, all information to be displayed should be grouped on one sign..*

- 5.34 The signage of buildings can greatly affect their appearance. In Conservation Areas, in particular, careful control over the design, form, size, location and materials used for signs is needed, to ensure they are in keeping with the area and the buildings to which they are fixed.

#### Blinds and shutters

- 5.35 It is important that, where blinds and shutters are required for functional or security reasons, they form part of the overall design of the shopfront.

### Policy HE.12

*The Local Planning Authority will permit blinds and canopies provided the size, colour, design and materials are appropriate to the character of the building and the area and they do not incorporate any significant advertising.*

*In the case of security shutters requiring planning permission, the Local Planning Authority will not grant permission unless they are designed as an integral part of a shopfront. Solid external shutters, which obscure the shopfront, will not be permitted.*

- 5.36 A distinction needs to be drawn between blinds and canopies of traditional appearance and design, required to protect goods on display, and the recent trend towards more garish designs and materials, whose principal purpose is to advertise.
- 5.37 There is a range of security measures that can be used to protect shopfronts, including the security shutter. When placed internally with an open lattice grill, the display function of the window is maintained outside shopping hours, and improved protection is provided for the premises. External shutters tend to mar the appearance of the building and deaden the shopping street. They are, therefore, rarely an appropriate solution. A combination of a lattice grill and toughened glass should be considered for maximum protection. Shopfront design

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

can help improve security by the use of smaller glazed units, strengthened mullions and stallrisers. Proposals will be expected to accord with Winchester City Council's "Design Guidance for the Control of Shopfronts and Signs" (1998).

### Historic Buildings

5.38 The extensive stock of historic buildings in the District represents a major asset. Many are of considerable local and national interest. The basic means of protecting these buildings is by their inclusion in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The City Council, therefore, aims to secure the retention, maintenance and continued use of historic buildings, particularly where they are listed, and will not permit development proposals which fail to secure this.

#### Changes of use

5.39 To ensure that listed buildings continue in an appropriate use, it may be necessary for a new use to be permitted. It is, however, important that the use is appropriate to the character of the building and that its essential features are retained.

#### Policy HE.13

*In order to protect the character of listed buildings and to secure the retention of their essential features, proposals for changes of use will only be permitted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that they:*

- (i) deal comprehensively with the intended use and operation of the whole building, and contain sufficiently detailed information to assess properly the true impact of the proposals;*
- (ii) propose a use which would not be harmful to the building or its character, including any features of special architectural or historic interest. Proposals which would result in the under-use of upper floors of historic buildings or inappropriate use of cellars will not be permitted;*

*(iii) involve a building that is capable of conversion.*

5.40 The Local Planning Authority aims to safeguard the long-term future and maintenance of listed buildings. Ill-considered proposals, drafted for short term expediency, which make use of one part of the building without proper regard for the remainder, can be prejudicial to the well-being of the whole building. The under-use of upper floors can be a particular problem in the larger commercial centres. This is a waste of precious resources and acts as a disincentive to repair and maintenance.

5.41 Unless necessary as ancillary for the efficient and viable use of the ground floor, the use of upper floors solely for shop storage purposes will be discouraged where the existing building is capable of use as residential or commercial accommodation, without detriment to its architectural or historic character. The Planning Authority will seek to reduce under-use through the exercise of planning and related powers. To enable the true impact to be assessed, changes required to meet hygiene, acoustic, fire and building regulation controls should be fully detailed with proposals.

5.42 Many cellars within the centre of Winchester are of archaeological interest, often pre-dating the present buildings. Proposals should seek to preserve them and where appropriate bring them into low impact use.

5.43 What may seem an innocuous proposal at the outset can have a dramatic impact on the fabric of a building, when health, fire and safety standards for the new use are taken into account. Also, the visual impact of a change of use must not be underestimated. Relatively cosmetic changes, such as the use of fluorescent lighting, and blinds in place of curtains, can considerably alter a building's character. The nature of the use and its demands on the building need to be fully understood at the outset to avoid problems arising later.

### Relaxation of policies and standards

- 5.44 It may sometimes be necessary for exceptions to policies to be allowed, or normal standards relaxed, if an appropriate use is to be found for an historic building. The Local Planning Authority may be prepared to relax specific planning, building control, highway and car parking standards and policies, in order to safeguard and promote the use of an historic building in a manner which is compatible with its architectural and historic interest. Reasonable standards of health, amenity and safety must be maintained.

### Alterations to historic buildings

- 5.45 It is very important that all changes affecting historic buildings are sympathetic to their character. This applies not only to a change of use, but to proposed alterations or additions.

### Policy HE.14

*The Local Planning Authority will not grant planning permission (where required) or listed building consent for any external or internal alteration, addition to, or change of use of, a listed building, which would adversely affect its architectural or historic character. Where alterations are permitted, the applicant will be responsible for providing adequate recording of those affected parts of the structure and conditions may be imposed to secure this.*

*The Local Planning Authority will not permit alterations which involve demolition of any part of a listed building unless:*

- (i) the historic form and structural integrity of the building are retained;*
- (ii) architectural and historic features important to the character of the building (including internal features) are retained;*
- (iii) the work does not harm the listed building;*

*(iv) the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the structure is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonable beneficial use, or of inappropriate structure or design.*

*Consent will not be granted without detailed plans showing the existing building and proposed works and a statement setting out the justification, design approach and methods for the work.*

- 5.46 In determining applications for Listed Building Consent or planning permission it is essential to have adequate information fully to assess the likely impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and its setting. Applicants for Listed Building Consent must be able to justify their proposals. They will need to show why works which would affect the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary.
- 5.47 Alterations to listed buildings often involve an element of demolition. It is not the intention of the Planning Authority to prevent buildings from evolving to meet changing demands, but Policy HE.14 sets out the broad criteria against which schemes will be assessed.

### Demolition of listed buildings

- 5.48 As buildings are listed in recognition of their special merit, consent for demolition will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances, and only after all other options have been fully evaluated. Government guidance is set out in PPG 15 and these considerations will be taken into account when determining an application for Listed Building Consent.

### Policy HE.15

*The Local Planning Authority will not permit the total demolition of listed buildings, unless under very special circumstances their condition makes it impracticable to repair, renovate, or adapt them to a reasonable beneficial use for which planning permission would be given.*

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### Setting of listed buildings

- 5.49 The setting of a listed building is often an essential feature of its character. Its protection and enhancement is, therefore, as important as that of the building or group of buildings. The setting is sometimes limited to the immediate surroundings of the building, but may often include land some distance away. The character of the setting can easily be destroyed by insensitive development, in the form of new buildings or changes to the landscape.
- 5.50 Some historic buildings because of their status enjoy pre-eminence in the streetscene, historic skyline or landscape and it is important that proposals for new development respect this and do not result in the loss or degradation of important views.
- 5.51 The scale of development need not be large for the impact to be significant. For example, the formation of a parking area in a front garden, or the subdivision of grounds by fencing or other means of enclosure, can have a dramatic effect. The cumulative effect of a series of apparently minor changes can also have a significant effect on the general ambience of a place, and careful consideration of all proposals is required. Government advice makes it clear that local planning authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the settings of listed buildings when considering applications that may affect them.

### Policy HE.16

*Planning permission will not be granted for development if it would have an adverse immediate or indirect effect on the setting of a listed building or would lead to the unsympathetic subdivision of its grounds.*

### Enforcement

- 5.52 Legislation provides a range of options to the Planning Authority to overcome breaches in listed building legislation. These include enforcement and prosecution. In undertaking work to listed

buildings, it is not unusual to encounter unexpected problems which cause the original design to require amendment. To avoid the risk of legal action it is in owners' and contractors' interests to contact the Local Planning Authority when such problems arise, so that a suitable solution can be found. Where work is undertaken to a listed building without the necessary consent, the City Council will seek to make full use of its powers to secure an appropriate remedy.

### Re-use and conversion of rural and industrial buildings

- 5.53 Changes in agricultural practices and demands have resulted in a number of agricultural buildings falling into disuse. General policy guidance on the reuse of these buildings is provided in Chapter 4. Policy HE.17 deals with changes of use affecting redundant agricultural, industrial or other rural buildings of historic or architectural merit.

### Policy HE.17

*The change of use of redundant agricultural and other rural or industrial buildings of historic or architectural interest will be permitted provided that:*

- (i) the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the building is capable of conversion without significant structural alteration or changes which would be detrimental to the distinctive character of the building (or its setting), its historic fabric or features. If appropriate, a significant proportion of the building's interior should be left un-subdivided to maintain its spatial qualities;*
- (ii) the building is incapable of being used in a more suitable way, e.g. ancillary to an adjoining use;*
- (iii) if the building forms part of a complex of agricultural or industrial buildings, a comprehensive strategy is put forward which shows the effects on any listed buildings and their settings.*

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 5.54 Policy HE.17 applies throughout the Plan area, as some former rural buildings have now been incorporated into built-up areas. It deals with all buildings of historic and architectural interest, whether listed or not. Where these buildings have become redundant, and cannot be used for suitable ancillary purposes, uses such as storage, employment, or community uses generally require less alteration to the fabric of these buildings than residential conversion and are, therefore, preferred.
- 5.55 The character of many farm buildings is derived from their simplicity, openness of the interior, lack of window openings and an uninterrupted roof plane.
- 5.56 A number of agricultural buildings remain in use for a variety of purposes, well suited to their design and character. Conversion to a more economically attractive use would often result in harm to their character and compromise in the alterations required for their adaptation. The Local Planning Authority will resist such changes. As a means of ensuring buildings are maintained in a good state of repair and continue to be used for a purpose to which they are best suited, given the often low level of income derived from them, the City Council will seek to offer assistance in the form of grant aid. In many cases, the nature and use of the building will be such that simple “first aid” measures e.g. the provision of a corrugated iron roof, will suffice.
- 5.57 There is widespread concern about the rate at which residential conversion schemes are coming forward, and the impact on the stock of historic farm and other rural buildings. Nationally and also in the District itself, a number of listed farm buildings have had to be “delisted” following conversion to dwellings. The very nature of many farm buildings (e.g. barns, granaries, etc.), means that inherent conflicts arise when adapting them to a use requiring the subdivision of spaces and the introduction of openings where few, if any, exist. English Heritage, in its 1993 statement “The Conversion of Historic Farm Buildings”, advocates a strong general presumption against residential conversion of listed farm buildings.
- 5.58 While the District does not have a great number of industrial buildings compared to other parts of the country, it does have a number of mills, forges, pumping stations and other structures, which are of architectural merit and historic interest. Industrial buildings are often very individual in character with their architectural and historic interest reflecting the function and requirements of the processes involved in their original use. Finding suitable new uses for such buildings when they become redundant is challenging and similar principles will apply for their conversion to that of rural buildings. A new use, which involves some degree of public access will usually be considered preferable where the building has an important interior.
- 5.59 Where the building adjoins, or is in close proximity to, another use, the possibility of it remaining largely unaltered and serving a subsidiary role needs to be fully evaluated. A number of barns operate in this way, providing ancillary facilities for the main residence close by. This provides a function for the building, enhancing the prospects of repair and maintenance, and avoids the need to erect new structures in the grounds, which can also be problematic. An ancillary use involving minimal alterations will always be preferable to residential conversion.
- 5.60 Provided the conversion is undertaken in a manner which respects the essential features and characteristics of the building and its setting, new employment and storage uses can be a valuable means of generating income for the repair and maintenance of an otherwise redundant building. Employment uses can also allow a degree of public access to be achieved, which enables the special interest of the interior to be appreciated.
- 5.61 There may be instances where an exception to normal policy may need to be made.

## 5. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

A barn isolated from its farmstead, and now forming part of a residential community, may be unsuited to employment use due to traffic considerations, etc. With its original purpose gone, an acceptable alternative use is required if the building is to receive the care and maintenance needed for long-term survival.

- 5.62 Residential conversions will therefore not be permitted unless this is the only means of ensuring the retention of the building and its character. Conversion to residential use will always be seen as a last resort, and alternatives such as employment and community uses must be evaluated in the first instance and applicants will be required to show why non-residential uses are not viable.
- 5.63 Conversions that require substantial reconstruction, or demand a high level of intervention to achieve the structural needs of the new use, are unlikely to be sympathetic. It is important to establish at the outset the nature of the work required to implement a conversion scheme, so that a judgement can be made on its suitability. Applicants are encouraged to submit concurrent planning and listed building applications supported by full measured drawings of the existing building and the proposals for conversion, to enable a judgement to be made.
- 5.64 Proposals for the conversion of a building which forms part of a group should consider, and provide information concerning, the intended use of the other buildings. This is to ensure that the conversion of one building does not pre-

empt a mix of uses, which will secure a more favourable future for the whole group. It is also important to ascertain how the new use will fit into the overall operation, if the historical and visual integrity of the group is not to be compromised. The Local Planning Authority will wish to be assured that the new use not only secures the future of the particular building which is the subject of the application, but serves to maintain or enhance the immediate environment, including other buildings in the group.

- 5.65 The setting provided for farm and other rural buildings is very important. A well undertaken conversion can often be marred by the use of inappropriate landscaping, for example. The problem is often greatest with residential conversions, but other uses can also give rise to difficulties. It is so fundamental that it needs to be resolved at the outset and not left as a reserved matter. The Local Planning Authority will be unlikely to grant permission in the absence of this information.
- 5.66 Proposals for the change of use of buildings of architectural or historic interest will also be subject to the requirements of Policy CE.17.