2a Modernisation External Features

The majority of houses in conservation areas were built in eras before internal plumbing to bathrooms and kitchens, let alone satellite television, central heating, boilers, burglar alarms and damp proof courses. Modern lifestyles require houses in conservation areas to accommodate at least some of these features. This section of the guide will set out how modern features can be incorporated into houses in conservation areas in ways which minimise their impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Rooflights

DO...

✔ Wherever possible, place new rooflights on roofslopes which do not overlook streets, public open spaces and rights of way. This will help the principal elevation(s) of the house to retain its original appearance, and where houses form part of a group, such as a terrace, the group value is upheld.

✔ Keep the number and size of rooflights to a minimum.

✔ Position rooflights where they respect the original architecture of the building. For example, rooflights should line up with and be no wider than the windows in the wall below.

✔ Position rooflights where they would traditionally be found. The highest edge of the rooflight should be well below the ridge of the roof, and the lower edge should be at least halfway up the roof slope if possible.

✔ Retain and repair existing traditional rooflights.

✔ Whenever new rooflights are to be installed, to old houses, they should be traditional in style. Manufacturers can usually supply rooflights which are appropriate to old houses. Where buildings have always had rooflights, historical photographs or similar neighbouring houses might reveal the traditional detailing.

✔ Ensure the rooflights are as close to flush with the roofline as possible.

DO NOT...

✖ Site rooflights in prominent locations where they would harm the individual character of a house or the group value of houses.

✖ Clutter the roof with a number of rooflights. This will detract from the character of the building and can devalue it.

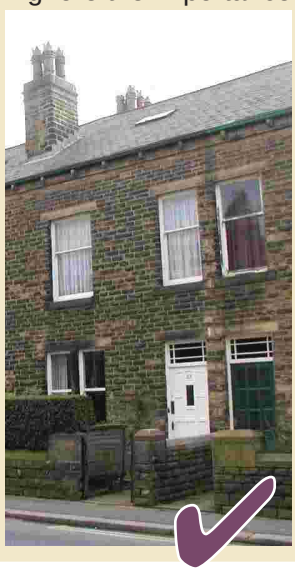
✖ Use large, modern style rooflights. Whilst acceptable on a modern property, they rarely respect the architecture and the scale of the openings of historic buildings.

✖ Ignore the positions and sizes of the original window openings of the house when installing rooflights. If this is ignored, the rooflights will appear intrusive.

✖ Position rooflights close to the ridge or eaves of the roof, as they will be out of character and instrusive.

✖ Replace or enlarge traditional rooflights with modern style ones. This will detract from the interest and appearance of the house and can devalue it.

✖ Ignore the importance of the detailing and style of rooflight. A modern rooflight can be just as intrusive as a modern window.



✖ Install rooflights which stand significantly proud of the roofline. They will be more prominent and will give the roof a 'cluttered' appearance.

External Pipework and Vents

DO...

✔ Ensure that new pipework and vents have Building Regulations approval. The installation of and works to central heating systems and gas fires must be carried out by a CORGI approved fitter.

✔ Ensure that new pipework is inside the house wherever possible and keep external pipework to a minimum. Ideally, the only external pipework on an old house should be the rainwater goods.

✔ Site external pipework and vents in inconspicuous locations on elevations which are not highly visible or architecturally important. Pipes and vents should be grouped closely together, possibly alongside rainwater pipes.

✔ Use cast iron for external pipework, as this is a long-lasting traditional, natural material and can be painted a dark inconspicuous colour. Vents should also be a dark colour and should not be larger or protrude further than is required by Building Regulations.

✔ Ensure that the installation of new flues, pipework and vents disturbs the stone 'bricks' of the wall of the house as little as possible and does not disrupt the coursing of the stone. Any new mortar should be made and applied in accordance with Section 1e of this guide.

DO NOT...

✖ Install pipework and vents which do not have Building Regulations Approval as you could endanger the health and comfort of the occupants of the house. Work by gas fitters without CORGI approval could be dangerous or even fatal.

✖ Install pipework and vents in prominent locations on the house, as this will harm its character and appearance.

✖ Use uPVC pipes, flues and vents. This is not a traditional material, cannot be maintained or repaired and has a limited lifespan. Grey uPVC will look particularly prominent.

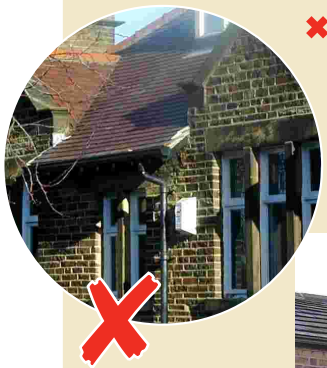
Burglar Alarms

DO...

✔ Locate burglar alarm boxes in inconspicuous locations, preferably not on the front or other prominent elevations of the house. Locate alarm boxes inside sheltered corners or in locations where they will not disrupt the appearance of the wall, such as tucked below the eaves, next to a rainwater pipe.

✔ Keep the length of external wiring required to a minimum and if possible, run it closely alongside existing pipes or flues.

DO NOT...



✖ Locate alarm boxes in highly prominent locations such as in the middle of an elevation or at the apex of a gable. This will negatively impact on the appearance of the house.

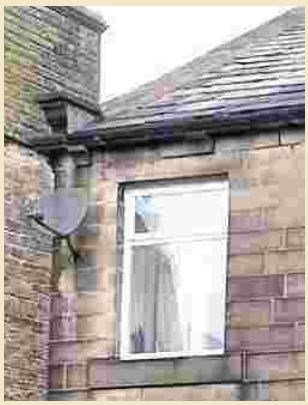
Satellite Dishes

In Conservation Areas Planning Permission is required for the installation of a satellite dish on any elevation, roofslope or side of the chimney of a house that faces onto a public highway. Listed Building Consent is required for satellite dishes anywhere on a Listed Building. Satellite dishes in Saltaire World Heritage Site are unlikely to get Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent due to the heritage significance of all elevations, chimney stacks and roofslopes.

DO...

✔ Consider the use of cable television (if available) instead of satellite, as this rarely requires any external alteration to a building.

✔ Locate satellite dishes on a side of the house which does not overlook a public highway. This way the expense and time delay of obtaining planning permission is avoided, as the dish will have less of an impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.



✔ Locate satellite dishes inside sheltered corners or in locations where they will not disrupt the appearance of the wall, such as tucked below the eaves, next to a rainwater pipe.

✔ Keep the length of external wiring required to a minimum and if possible, run it closely alongside existing pipes or flues.

✔ Seek advice from the Conservation team if you are unsure.

DO NOT...

✖ Install a satellite dish overlooking a public highway without obtaining Planning Permission first. The Council can legally enforce the removal of the dish.

✖ Locate satellite dishes in highly prominent locations such as in the middle of an elevation or at the apex of a gable. This will negatively impact on the appearance of the house.

Damp Proofing

DO...

✔ Follow the advice of a detailed survey by a damp specialist who has experience in dealing with historic buildings. This is because the disposal of damp in historic buildings is substantially different than in modern buildings.

✔ Be aware that draft proofing, high levels of moisture in the air from bathing and cooking, and overheating can cause internal condensation which can be mistaken for damp, while blocked drains, a faulty roof, rainwater goods or pointing can be an open invitation to damp. Tackle these problems before even considering damp proofing your property. Historic buildings have stood for a long time without damp proof courses, therefore strong justification is needed for the installation of one.

✔ If a damp proof system has to be installed, ensure that it has independent approval in terms of it materials and construction. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) has undertaken independent tests on different types of damp proofing.

DO NOT...

✖ Follow the advice of damp specialists without proven experience in dealing with historic buildings or who do not undertake detailed surveys. Ill-advised damp proof courses or tanking can force moisture into the internal timber or external stonework of a house and rapidly cause rot and decay.

✖ If an injected damp proof course (DPC) is to be used, avoid injecting through the external stonework, as this creates an unsightly row of holes which disfigures traditional houses.