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# Section 3



### 3.00 The Historic Environment

This design supplement sets out the process for managing change affecting heritage assets within Central Bedfordshire, and provides guidance and principles on design interventions in the Historic Environment. This supplement should be read in conjunction with national policy and guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council's Development Strategy, and other relevant sections of the Design Guide.

#### 3.01 The Historic Environment of Central Bedfordshire

##### 3.01.01

Central Bedfordshire has an especially rich and varied heritage of buildings, historic parks, gardens and landscapes, archaeological sites and monuments. The character and identity of Central Bedfordshire is to a large extent defined by its historic environment. This includes approximately 2000 listed buildings (of which 162 are Grade I or Grade II\* listed including most Parish Churches, many fine country houses and a variety of other buildings and structures), 61 conservation areas, 13 Registered Parks and Gardens and 84 Scheduled Monuments of national importance ranging from prehistoric and Roman settlements and ritual sites, medieval settlements, castles and moated sites to monuments of the industrial age as well as a wealth of undesignated archaeological sites and features, historic buildings and landscapes.

##### 3.01.02

These heritage assets have survived through many centuries to the present day. Their presence and continuity in the landscape adds greatly to the quality of our lives and our understanding of the past in relation to the present and our contemporary concerns, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and by creating and sustaining a sense of local character distinctiveness and sense of place.



**Fig 3.02** Someries Castle gatehouse (1464)  
one of the oldest brick buildings in the country

## 3.02 Policy Guiding Development Affecting the Historic Environment

### 3.02.01

#### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework or the NPPF (CLG 2012) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and makes clear the government's intention to plan for prosperity and economic growth. In this regard the framework indicates that the planning system must work to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The NPPF defines three dimensions to sustainable development which give rise to the need for the planning system to form a number of roles:

- Economic
- Social
- Environmental

### 3.02.02

These roles are not mutually exclusive, but rather entirely dependent upon one another. The environmental role includes the need for the planning system to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

### 3.02.03

The NPPF defines the historic environment as:

*“all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.”*

All buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their heritage interest are referred to as “heritage assets” by the NPPF. Heritage assets include Designated Assets:

- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Registered Battlefields
- Protected Wreck Sites
- Conservation Areas
- World Heritage Sites

### 3.02.04

Heritage assets also include Non-Designated Assets and these are sites/ monuments/ buildings/ landscapes identified by the Local Planning Authority as important, (including assets identified on local lists). The extent, nature and character of non-designated heritage assets are often defined in the Historic Environment Record (HER).



**Fig 3.03** Biggleswade Medieval Ringwork and Prehistoric Ring Ditches



**Fig 3.04** Totternhoe Knolls Motte & Bailey Castle

### 3.03 What is a Heritage Asset?

#### 3.03.01

The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as:

*“a building, monument, site, place or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”.*

Many heritage assets are covered by a national or local designation, i.e. a listed building, scheduled monument, registered park and garden or conservation area. Buildings, parks and gardens and archaeological sites (standing or buried) identified by the local authority as locally important are also heritage assets.



Fig 3.05 Historic Environment Record Resources

#### 3.03.02

### The Historic Environment Record (HER)

Central Bedfordshire's Historic Environment Record contains details of all known archaeological sites, historic buildings and historic landscape features within the area. In addition to a computer database and GIS it consists of written and printed information, plans, illustrations, aerial and other photographs which are available for use by all, including the Council's officers, planners, developers, consultants, schoolchildren, students and the public. It is also the prime source for identifying Heritage Assets for inclusion in Heritage Asset Assessments and Statements of Significance as required to accompany planning applications in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. The Historic Environment Record Team also maintains the Historic Environment Record for Luton Borough Council incorporated within the Central Bedfordshire HER.

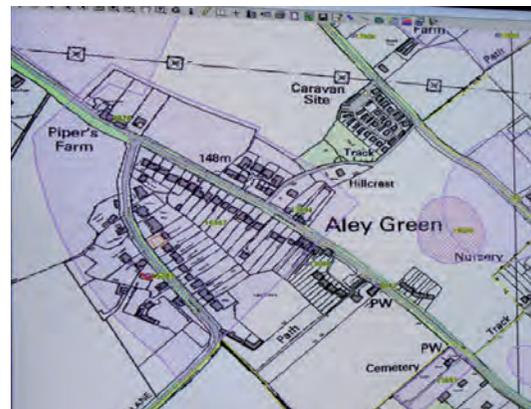


Fig 3.06 Historic Environment Record GISlayers

#### 3.03.03

The HER is a key source for every aspect of Central Bedfordshire's historic environment. It contains information on a wide range of Heritage Assets, including all known archaeological sites, historic buildings and historic landscape features within the area. Available to all are details of nearly 11,000 items for all periods from the earliest human activity (125,000 years ago) to World War II, including stray finds and industrial remains. All Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest are recorded together with ancient woodlands, historic parks or gardens and field systems. Buried remains and many demolished buildings are also included. The record has a wide range of uses and users and enquiries can be dealt with remotely or by visiting in person.



Fig 3.07 Manor Farm onion shed Lower Caldecote

### 3.04 Designated Heritage Assets

#### 3.04.01

##### Listed Buildings

A listed building is a building or structure of special architectural or historic interest and is included within a list called the 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest', drawn up by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

#### 3.04.02

There are three grades of listed building reflecting their relative importance, Grade I is the highest and represents about 2.5% of the total number of listed buildings, followed by Grade II\* and Grade II. The same statutory controls apply to all listed buildings regardless of grade. Listed buildings are each unique and irreplaceable, therefore great weight should be given to their conservation.

#### 3.04.03

The listing of a building includes the exterior and interior as well as any object or structure fixed to the building. Furthermore, any objects or structures within the setting of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, form part of its land and have done so since before 1st July 1948 are also included within the listing.



Fig 3.08 Park House, Toddington



Fig 3.09 Listed Building, Woburn



Fig 3.10 Church of St Mary, Harlington



Fig 3.11 85 Dunstable St, Ampthill

## 3.04.04

**Listed Building Consent** is required for works to demolish, extend or alter a listed building (and/ or a building and structure in its curtilage) in a manner which affects its special historic or architectural interest. Please note that it is a criminal offence to undertake works to a listed building without the necessary consents.

## 3.04.05

Regular maintenance and small scale 'like for like' repairs will not require listed building consent, however it is recommended that you consult the Council's Conservation Officer who will be able to provide helpful advice and guidance on appropriate repairs. Repairs should be undertaken using the same methods, materials and finishes to ensure the integrity and historic character of the listed building is maintained.



Fig 3.12 Interior of former Town Hall, Toddington

For example, the careful replacement of part of a rafter foot or other section of timber frame which has deteriorated from rot, with a matching section of timber pieced or spliced in, would be considered a repair that would not require consent. The complete replacement of a timber window or door, regardless of the proposed material is, however, likely to require listed building consent.

## 3.04.06

The interior of a listed building is often of special interest as well as the exterior, therefore any internal works which affect its special character will require listed building consent. Furthermore, the plan form (internal layout) of a building, particularly what is called a compartmentalised plan from the 18th and 19th century, is also of special interest and therefore any works to alter this will require consent.



Fig 3.13 Re-roofing of the stables at Harlington Manor

## Summary

### What requires consent ?

- Demolition of all or part of a listed building or building/ structure within its curtilage.
- Any extensions to a listed building.
- Alterations (including internal works) which affect the special character of the building.
- Repairs which involve the replacement of important parts of the building's fabric or the use of different materials or methods (e.g. replacement of a slate roof with tiles).

**Please note** that this summary should only be used as a guide. If you are in any doubt, please contact the Council's Conservation Team who will be able to provide clarification.



Fig 3.14 Scheduled Monument All Saints Church, Segenhoe

## 3.04.07

**Scheduled Monuments**

A scheduled monument is an archaeological site or monument which is considered to be nationally important and afforded legal protection from unauthorised change under the terms of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. Sites and monuments included in the “schedule” or list are wide ranging and include above and below ground remains. In Central Bedfordshire there are 84 Scheduled Monuments; these include prehistoric burial mounds, high status Roman settlements, medieval castles and moats and post medieval bridge and ruined houses. In some cases it is possible for sites and buildings to be both scheduled monuments and listed buildings, for example St Mary’s Old Church, Clophill and All Saints Church, Segenhoe.

## 3.04.08

Under the terms of the Act any works that would affect a scheduled monument must be granted consent by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport before any work can be carried out. English Heritage advises the government on each application and administers the consent system.

**Unauthorised works to a scheduled monument are a criminal offence.**

## 3.04.09

**Conservation Areas**

Conservation Areas are defined as areas of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The designation of a conservation area indicates the Council’s positive commitment to these special areas and its intention to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment

## 3.04.10

Conservation Areas within Central Bedfordshire range from large towns such as Dunstable, to small rural villages and hamlets such as Eversholt. There are currently 61 Conservation Areas within the district and new areas are considered periodically.



**Fig 3.15** Scheduled Monument, Knolls Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery, Dunstable Downs



**Fig 3.16** The Clock Tower and Square, Dunstable Conservation Area



**Fig 3.17** Husborne Crawley Conservation Area

## 3.04.11

Many of the Conservation Areas within the district have Conservation Area Appraisals which provide an assessment of the special character, appearance and setting of the area and sets out what features contribute to its special interest.

Within Conservation Areas, some buildings or structures may be highlighted as buildings of local interest (or positive contribution buildings). These buildings/ structures are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area and will be classed as undesignated heritage assets. Other features such as highway surfaces, paving materials and historic street furniture can also contribute to the local sense of place and special character, for example, the large historic cobbled area surrounding the former Town Hall in Woburn.

## 3.04.12

Planning permission is required for the substantial demolition of a building over 115m<sup>3</sup> and for the demolition of any wall, gate or fence which is more than 1 metre high and abutting a highway, or over 2 metres high elsewhere in the Conservation Area. In addition, some permitted development rights have been removed from residential properties located within Conservation Areas.

Two Conservation Areas, Toddington and Husborne Crawley, have 'Article 4 Directions' in place which remove specified certain permitted development rights where such permitted development poses a particular threat to Conservation Area character (such as a window replacement).



Fig 3.18 Toddington Conservation Area

## 3.04.13

### Registered Parks and Gardens

The Register of Parks and Gardens is a national record of designed landscapes considered to be of special historic interest in England. The register includes over 1600 sites and is compiled and maintained by English Heritage. Registered landscapes are graded in the same way as listed buildings, reflecting their relative significance. Grade I sites are of exceptional interest; Grade II\* sites are particularly important, of more than special interest; and Grade II sites are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them (English Heritage 2010). The criteria for including a historic designed landscape on the register can be found on the English Heritage website.



Fig 3.19 Flitwick Manor Park

## 3.04.14

Central Bedfordshire has a particularly high number of historic parks and gardens, including 13 designated landscapes, many of which are of exceptional interest and importance, namely Woburn Park and Wrest Park.



**Fig 3.20** Archer Pavilion in snow 6 December 2007

## 3.04.15

The inclusion of a designed landscape on the register does not bring additional statutory controls, however, the Local Planning Authority is required to consider the register entry as a material planning consideration.



**Fig 3.21** The Swiss Garden, Old Warden Park

## 3.04.16

It is often the case that a registered park and garden will include other designated heritage assets, notably listed buildings. In many cases the main historic house, such as Woburn Abbey (Grade I listed), and possibly parkland features, buildings and boundary walls are separately listed. Some registered landscapes are also included as parts of a Conservation Area e.g. Ampthill Park, and some including Wrest Park have Scheduled Monuments within their boundaries.



**Fig 3.22** The Statutory Listed Gardeners Lodge and boundary wall to Woburn Park. These structures will also form part of the Registered Park and Garden

### 3.05 Requirements for Developments Affecting the Historic Environment in Central Bedfordshire

#### 3.05.01

##### Heritage Asset Assessments

All proposed interventions in the historic environment need to be based on a full understanding of what is important about a place, or defining how, why and to what extent it has heritage values: in sum, its significance (EH Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance 2008). This understanding should then form the basis for developing proposals for positive change to heritage assets which protect this significance from harm or loss.



Fig 3.23 Flitwick construction impact

#### 3.05.02

On this basis, the National Planning Policy Framework now requires applicants to provide the following information for all planning, listed building consent and conservation area consent applications affecting a heritage asset/ s.

1. Description of the significance of the Heritage Assets affected by the planning proposal and the contribution of their setting to that significance. For archaeologically significant heritage assets with archaeological interest, this description should comprise all the known data about the archaeological resource.
2. Assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the Heritage Asset. For example, will foundation excavation damage any surviving below ground archaeological remains, will the works involve the loss of historic fabric within a listed building.
3. The principles of and justification for the proposed works.

#### 3.05.03

The document which contains this information is called a **Heritage Asset Assessment** or **Statement of Significance**. For heritage assets with archaeological interest, a description of its significance should be set out in an **Archaeological Heritage Asset Assessment**. In Central Bedfordshire we do not ask for all planning applications to contain an archaeological heritage asset assessment and therefore recommend that applicants contact the Archaeology Team directly to enquire as to whether this is necessary (see section 3.09 for contact details).

#### 3.05.04

The purpose of the document is to demonstrate a full understanding of the significance of the heritage asset affected and that this significance has been taken into account when developing proposals for change. The level of detail in the document should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected and should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on that significance (NPPF, paragraph 128).

## 3.05.05

**Descriptions of Significance for Heritage Assets with Archaeological Interest**

A description of significance for heritage assets with archaeological interest can range from a brief desk-based survey of the resource to an intrusive investigation. In many cases the description of significance can be derived from a desk-based assessment using the Historic Environment Record (HER) and other appropriate sources such as historic maps.

## 3.05.06

There are, however, applications where a desk-based assessment cannot provide adequate information on the archaeology of the site or its archaeological potential. For example, where cropmark evidence in the HER suggests that a prehistoric or Roman settlement exists but the date, extent and character is not known, or where HER information from the surrounding area points to the application site having archaeological potential but it does not contain any known archaeological remains.

## 3.05.07

On these occasions an archaeological field evaluation is needed to provide the necessary information for the description of significance of the heritage asset. An evaluation usually consists of one or more stages of fieldwork and can include; field walking, earthwork survey, geophysical survey and trial trenching.

The combination of techniques used at any given site depends on the type of archaeology that is expected and the present land use at the site.

## 3.05.08

In terms of the impact assessment, construction works will generally have a negative and irreversible impact on archaeological remains, although this can be lessened by sensitive foundation design. When all the information on the archaeology of the application site has been assembled, the impact of the proposed development on archaeology can be assessed (NPPF paragraphs 128 and 129). As much detail as possible should be included in this section; for example the dimensions of proposed foundations, whether there will be any underground services or ground reduction for the creation of features such as driveways.



**Fig 3.24** Warren Farm, Ampthill Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

## 3.05.09

**Descriptions of Significance for Historic Buildings and Structures**

Most of the traditional buildings and historic areas in Central Bedfordshire have evolved through generations with some being representative of many hundreds of years of adaptation. These changes are often of importance in their own right and should be identified when assessing the significance of a building as a whole. When providing a description of the significance, particularly a listed building, it is often helpful to include a coloured phasing diagram based on a measured survey drawing of the building which shows the original structure and features of special interest, and subsequent phases of additions and alterations. For smaller scale works, this might only apply to the part of the building affected by the proposals.

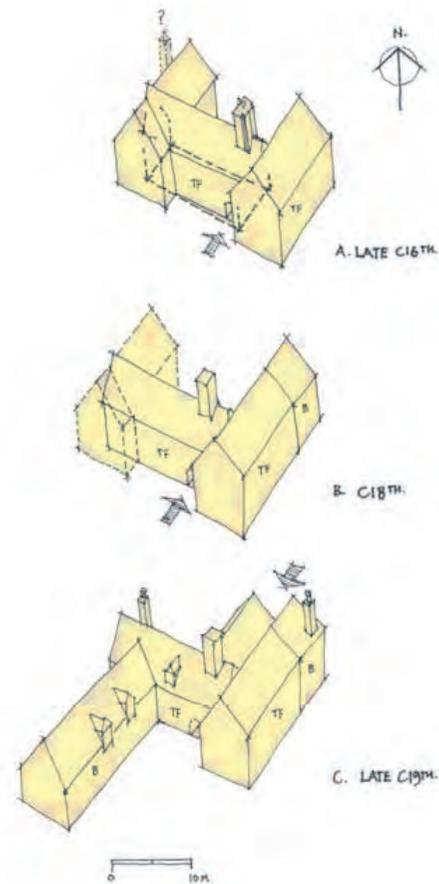
## 3.05.10

When appropriate, the description should be prepared and assessed using specialist historic building conservation skills and expertise. For any statements of significance, the Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record should be consulted as well as the formal list description or register entry, which can be obtained from the National Heritage List for England via the English Heritage website.

**PHASE A:** The possible extent of an original 3 bay hall is shown dotted. The building is timber framed (TF) with cross wings at both ends (the drawing could also show where the evidence for this can be found in the building). Early on (and possibly at the date of construction) the cross passage was blocked by the chimney stack – always show where stacks are and were (shown conjecturally on the diagram as a dotted outline of a stack with a question mark) as they are important elements of a buildings development.

**PHASE B:** The eighteenth century sees the destruction of the western cross-wing (occasionally cross-wings are abandoned or more often part destroyed by a fire?). By showing the rough location of this building phase the possibility of presence of archaeology can be demonstrated. There is also the addition of a brick(B) extension to the eastern cross wing.

**PHASE C:** The late nineteenth century (which can often be supported by photographs and early building control plans) sees the addition of a long stable range to the south side (roughly along the line of the former cross wing). A further brick extension to the north side obscures the original rear cross passage door and in the case shown the orientation of the building changes with the arrow showing the new 'front' entrance. Identifying changes in orientation of a building can be an important part of explaining and showing understanding of a buildings development.



**Fig 3.25** The story of a building - Complex buildings with multiple building phases can often best be illustrated as a series of simple sketches highlighting the key phases of the building. The sketch is based on a late medieval hall in Central Bedfordshire with subsequent additions.

### 3.05.11

#### If the Information is not Supplied

If the appropriate information as set out above is not submitted, the application will either not be validated or can be withdrawn until the information has been obtained. Ultimately, if the information is not made available, the planning/ listed building consent application can be refused on the grounds that it does not contain enough information to be able to assess the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset and does not conform to paragraph 128 of the NPPF.



**Fig 3.26** Long thraw thatched cottage, Wrestlingworth - application of vernacular materials contribute to local distinctiveness

### 3.06 Development Affecting a Heritage Asset with Archaeological Interest

#### 3.06.01

Where it is clear that a proposed development will have an effect on a heritage asset with archaeological interest there are a number of possible courses of action:

#### 3.06.02

If the proposed development will cause substantial harm to archaeological remains and the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest it is possible to refuse the planning application.



Fig 3.27 Archaeological Excavation at Sandy Roman Town

This does not happen very often, more usually where the development will have an effect on archaeological remains a condition is attached to the planning permission for an archaeological investigation to be done in advance of construction work. The investigation is designed to record the archaeological remains before they are lost and to advance our understanding of the past (NPPF, paragraph 141). The outcome of the archaeological investigation is a published report and the finds and records from the excavation are deposited with the local museum where they are publicly accessible. Sometimes archaeological remains can be preserved within a development, perhaps within a public open space or under a building where the

foundations have been designed so that they do not have an impact on archaeological deposits.

#### 3.06.03

#### Promoting and Interpreting Our Past

The value of archaeology in creating a sense of place and local character is recognised in the NPPF, as is its value in contributing to our understanding of the past. This is partly achieved through publishing the results of excavations and putting the archives in museums. It can also mean creating interpretation of the archaeological heritage both on site through boards and signage and by other means such as web sites. This can also be put in place where appropriate through planning conditions.

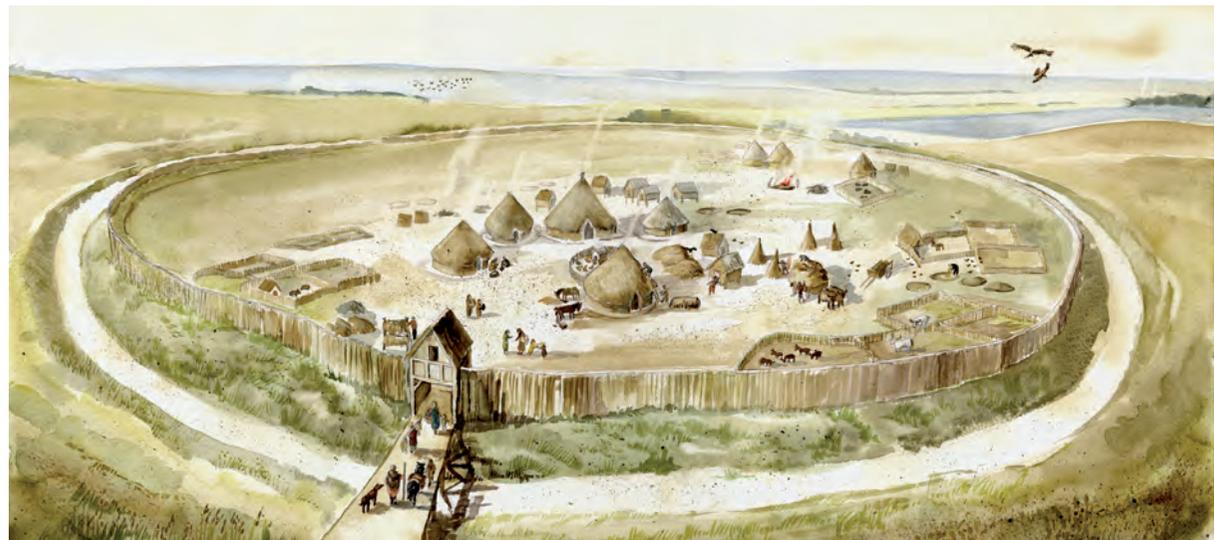


Fig 3.28 Reconstruction Drawing of Maiden Bower Hillfort, Dunstable in the Iron age.

### 3.07 Historic Buildings and their Setting

#### 3.07.01

Unlike the large majority of modern buildings, most traditional buildings are constructed of vernacular materials which were, until the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of improved communications, locally indigenous to the area. These local vernacular materials make an important contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area as set out in Section 1 (Placemaking Principles).



Fig 3.30 Toddington - Conger Hill, and bailey enclosure, with Church beyond



Fig 3.29 Diamond leaded light in a Bedford Estate cottage - an important feature of the building's historic character and appearance. Every effort should be made to retain features such as these.



Fig 3.31 All Saints Church Segenhoe Grade II star Listed Building & Scheduled Monument

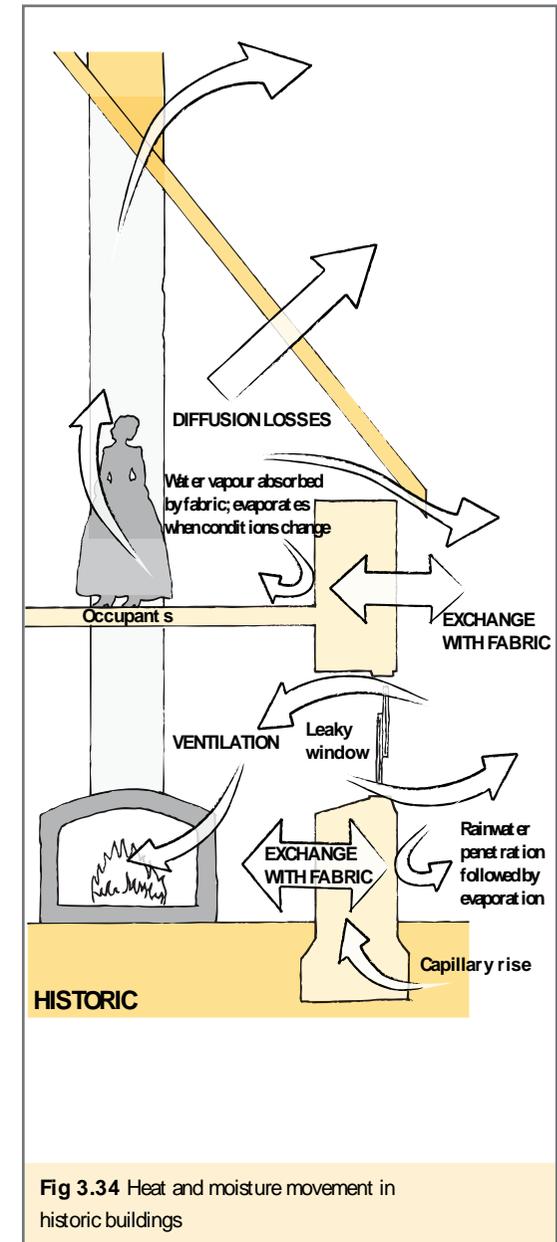
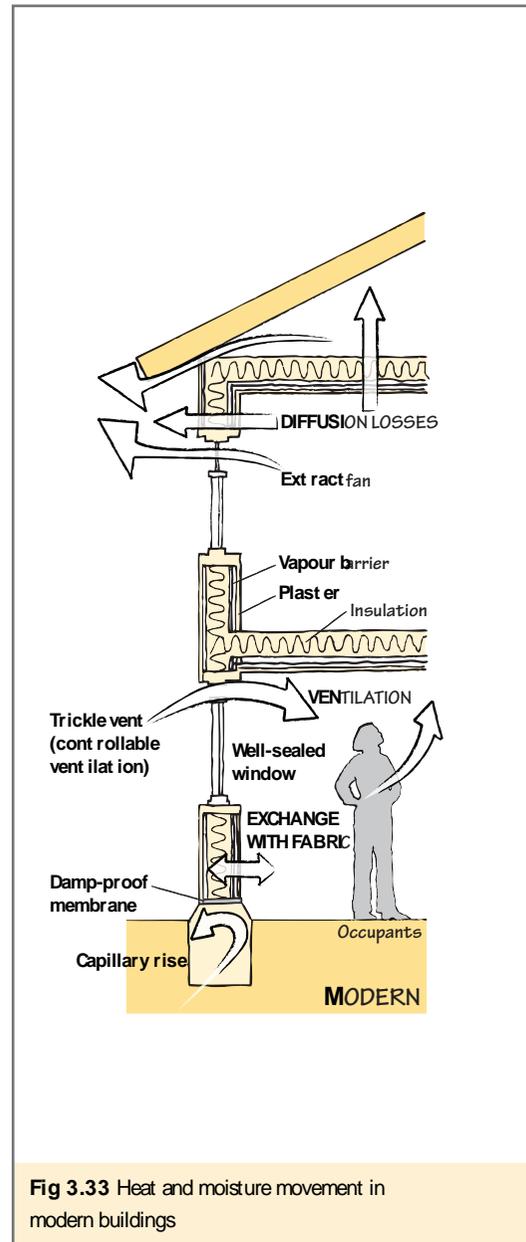
## 3.07.02

### Traditional Building Construction – the need for old buildings to breathe

When considering any repairs to a traditional building, whether it is listed or not, it is important to understand both the building's construction, sources of decay and the vernacular materials used. As shown in the illustration below, traditional buildings were constructed in porous breathable materials such as soft handmade bricks and timber, which allow moisture to be adsorbed and then evaporated from the surface. Mortars and renders used were usually a mix of lime and sand.



Fig 3.32 Cockayne Hatley Church setting



## 3.07.03

From the mid 19th century onwards, mass produced impervious materials came into general use. The use of these materials on traditional buildings not only has a negative impact on their local character and integrity, but can cause significant decay and damage to the building fabric through damp penetration. The use of inappropriate modern tools and techniques, such as disc-cutters to remove existing pointing or form new openings, can also result in significant damage to building fabric.



**Fig 3.36** Barn at Barton le Clay showing different depths of weatherboarding



**Fig 3.38** West Front of St Peters



**Fig 3.35** Ironstone repointed using lime mortar and a sharp gritty sand providing a traditional finish which will preserve the integrity of the historic stonework



**Fig 3.37** A tidy and painstaking example of historic timber frame reconstruction where extensive frame component replacement was required



**Fig 3.39** The damaging effects of cement pointing

## 3.07.04

**Repair and Maintenance**

Like for like repairs and replacement in matching materials, undertaken using traditional methods are always strongly encouraged, particularly in relation to listed buildings, as these will conserve the integrity of the building and the local distinctiveness of the area. Regular repair and maintenance is also crucial to prevent deterioration and damage of the building, ensuring it is conserved for the enjoyment of future generations

## 3.07.05

Be aware of over restoration. This can be one of the most damaging interventions to the historic environment and can not only harm the appearance of a historic building, but can also result in the loss of its intrinsic special interest.

## 3.07.06

**Alterations and Extensions**

Most listed buildings in Central Bedfordshire can accommodate some degree of sensitive extension, associated thoughtful change or sympathetic alteration. There is, however, a balance that must always be carefully struck to ensure that any proposed changes and additions do not damage or compromise the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

This applies to both the interior as well as the exterior, materials of construction and other fabric or decorative elements which contribute to the overall special interest of the building. At the heart of any proposals for change should be a **fully informed understanding** of what comprises the intrinsic special interest of the listed building or **its significance**. When considering proposals to extend and/ or alter a listed building, both the principles set out in the Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplement and those set out below should be considered.

## 3.07.08

- **Retention of Historic Fabric and Important Features** Every opportunity should be taken to retain original features and historic fabric when altering or extending a listed building to ensure its integrity, character and local distinctiveness is maintained. These include features such as original roof coverings and internal finishes such as lath and plaster ceilings, original or historic skirting boards and internal doors which are becoming increasingly rare.

## 3.07.09

If the loss of historic fabric and features can be fully justified against the wider benefits of the proposals, they should be recorded prior to their removal. The level of recording will depend on the significance of the feature to be lost and will be assessed using the guidelines set out in the English Heritage document Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (2006).

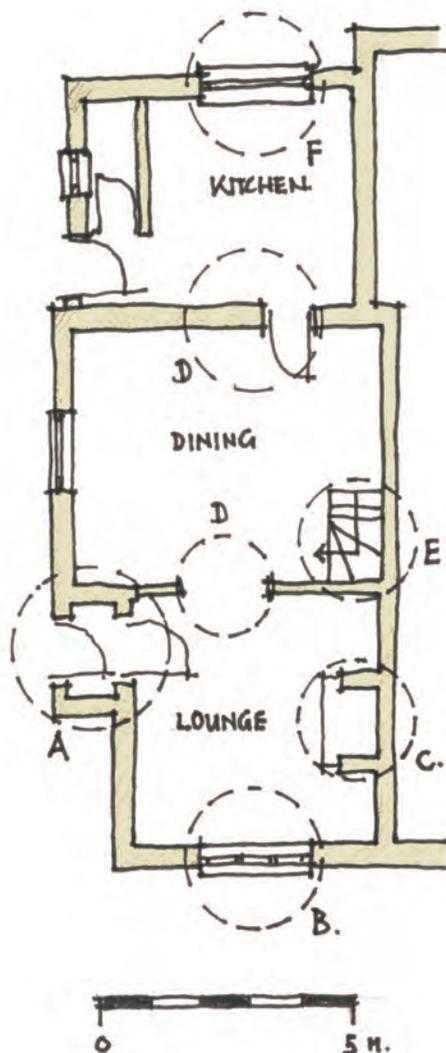
## 3.07.10

One particular traditional historic feature which makes an important contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of Central Bedfordshire is long straw thatched roofs with simple ridge detailing. Some of the 200 thatched buildings in the District have retained this important material and detailing, however many have been changed to water reed or combed wheat reed thatch, particularly in the second half of the 20th century.

## 07.11

Central Bedfordshire Council aims to preserve this important long straw tradition by ensuring the retention of existing long straw thatched roofs and encouraging the re-introduction of the thatching material with simple vernacular detailing where this is technically appropriate.

- A.** Original entrances and porches should be retained. Alterations which render original entrances redundant should be avoided.
- B.** The windows of an historic building are one of the most important features. Alterations to the size and type of windows is unlikely to be acceptable (unless it is informed reinstatement of original windows and proportions).
- C.** The chimney breast and fireplace are important dating features of a building and provide important evidence of how a house was used historically. There are historic and constructional reasons for not removing chimney breasts in an historic building.
- D.** Alterations to the plan form should retain original partitions and internal walls. Some alteration may be acceptable (the widening of a door) but the original plan form should be easily readable. In some cases, unusual construction techniques may require all existing fabric to be retained – always consult the conservation officer before considering changes to internal partitions in a listed building.
- E.** The staircase where original is an important dating feature of a building and its retention is essential. This will often be an issue where plans for loft conversions in two storey houses need to take account of current building regulations with regard to fire resistance of staircases, staircase enclosure and means of escape.
- F.** Openings in rear walls may be altered to provide means of access to gardens. This will depend on the nature of the existing windows and their contribution to the special interest of the building. Where alteration is acceptable the width of the opening should not change.



**Fig 3.40** The plan form of an historic building is an important part of its special interest. Even the simplest and most humble of dwellings can have a plan form which is worthy of retention. The example shows a typical plan form of a modest estate cottage, examples of which are found across Central Bedfordshire.



**Fig 3.41** Staircase at 39 Church Street Amptill



**Fig 3.42** Historic console at Queen Anne Summerhouse

## 3.07.12

- **Scale ,Height, Depth, Massing and Bulk**

It is crucial that the size of any proposed extensions or additions such as the introduction of dormer windows and porches, do not dominate, overpower or overwhelm the original or existing building and its setting in terms of scale, bulk, material or siting. Extensions should be seen as subservient, should respect the form and character of the building and should not obscure the interpretation of the building's original function. For example, extensions which are very domestic in scale, bulk or material could have a detrimental impact on the character and legibility of former agricultural buildings which have been subsequently converted to residential use.

## 3.07.13

- **High Quality Design** Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to promoting excellence in design and reinforcing local distinctiveness, vernacular traditions and craftsmanship. Any extensions and/ or alterations to a listed building should always be of the highest quality in design that compliments the architectural and historic values of the building. The Council is not particularly prescriptive in defining or imposing a particular architectural style or design approach.

It is, however, of great importance that any design concept positively relates to features which, as a whole, contribute to a building's character, for example its proportions, feel and rhythm. Materials are also very important and should be of a high quality that compliments the historic character and appearance of the building.



**Fig 3.43** End House, Eversholt. Extension creates a junction between old and new

## 3.07.14

- **Junction between Old and New** The junction between new work and the existing fabric always needs particular attention both for its impact on the significance of the building and the impact on its setting (English Heritage Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide 2012).

## 3.07.15

- **Reversibility** The concept of reversibility should form the basis of all proposed work to historic buildings. The building should be capable of being returned to its former condition with no permanent damage of the important fabric of the building. In practise, this is sometimes difficult to achieve. It should always be borne in mind that the heritage values of a building can be many and varied and that there is always a balance that needs to be struck when trying to build reversibility into a scheme. The concept of reversibility alone should not be used to justify alteration or addition, particularly if the significance of the building will be substantially harmed.

Section 3



Fig 3.44 Very good traditional shopfront - Leighton Buzzard



Fig 3.45 Fanlight, Linslade. A feature which contributes to historic character



Fig 3.46 Sympathetic contemporary addition creating a foyer to a Victorian church. Linslade

## 3.07.16

### Conversions and Change of Use

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural District which has a substantial number of historic farm buildings, many of which are listed. Such groups of traditional farm buildings, including those formerly belonging to large farming estates, are an important and notable characteristic of the District.

## 3.07.17

Converting buildings, particularly traditional farm buildings such as barns, stables, cart sheds and onion sheds to residential or office use can prove challenging in terms of ensuring the historic values of the building are retained. This is particularly the case for barn conversions. There is generally a presumption in favour of retaining the single space qualities of this building type with limited subdivisions and preferably using existing openings with limited or no additional openings in the structure.

## 3.07.18

Where subdivision is considered acceptable, it needs to respect existing historic fabric, and where possible, enhance the sense of openness. Whilst this can sometimes be difficult to achieve, there are a number of innovative and creative solutions which can be explored when considering conversion of these sensitive building types, such as glass flooring and screens.

In terms of any external alterations, the agricultural character of a traditional farm building needs to be retained as far as possible. Important features which make an important contribution to their character such as ventilation details, threshing doors, and long unbroken roof profiles should be retained and any new openings kept to a minimum.

The layout or plan form of farm buildings should also be retained as part any conversion scheme. Extensions to a barn or farm building, particularly glazed extensions such as conservatories will be resisted due to both their domesticating effect and the potential reduction in the legibility of the plan form of the farm complex.

Further guidance on the conversion of historic farm buildings can be found in the English Heritage document, *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice* (2006).



**Fig 3.47** Careful and thoughtful intervention to historic buildings enables as much historic fabric to be retained preserving the character and special interest of the building

Section 3



**Fig 3.48** New openings should be kept to a minimum and cart openings and doors such as those at Crawley Hall Barns, Husborne Crawley should be retained as part of a conversion scheme.



**Fig 3.50** A farm complex in Sewell showing the important relationship between the farm buildings and the farm house, and its wider rural farmland setting. It is essential that this relationship between farm buildings and their setting is maintained.



**Fig 3.52** Features such as shutters are important to the agricultural character and appearance of a farm building and can be made a feature in works to convert a building. Water End Barns, Eversholt.



**Fig 3.49** Large projecting cart entrance with gabled midstrey in the timber framed 18th century threshing barn at Longslade Lane, Woburn



**Fig 3.51** Water End Barns, Eversholt. A successful conversion of a Bedford Estates model farm complex into office accommodation.



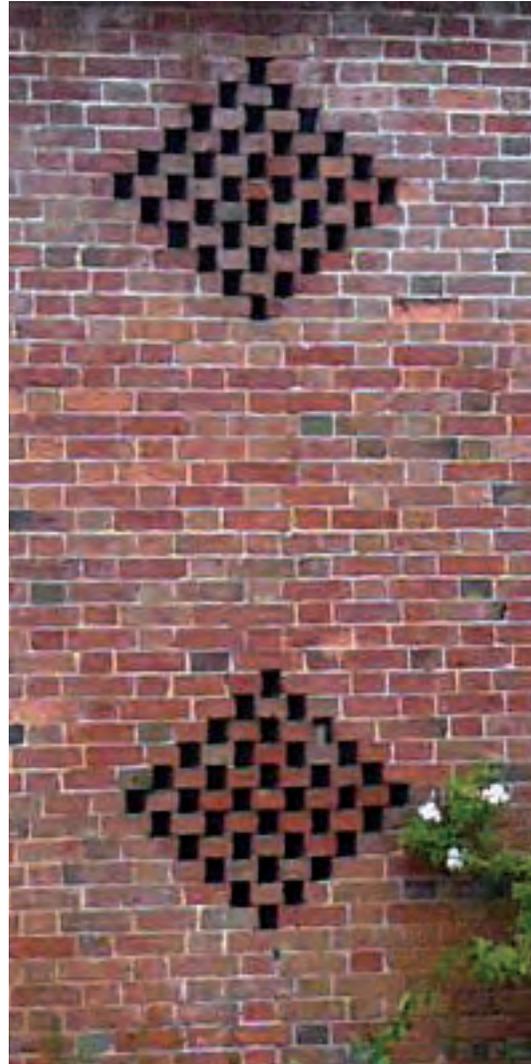
**Fig 3.53** Bodger Barn, Sewell. Conversion of the timber framed barn to residential accommodation which has retained its historic character and setting.



**Fig 3.54** Lower Farm, Millbrook. One of many model farm complexes within Central Bedfordshire created by the Bedford Estate which consist of a compact set of red brick buildings arranged in a particular pattern (such as an E shape) which integrated all farm based activities to allow maximum efficiency of the overall functioning of the farm.



**Fig 3.55** Thatched cottage, Woburn St. Amphill



**Fig 3.56** Diamond pattern ventilation detail at Horsemoor Farm, Woburn. One of many different types of traditional ventilation details which can denote the type of materials that were formerly stored in the building.

### 3.07.19

## Demolition

Any proposals to demolish all or part of a listed building will not likely be supported other than in exceptional circumstances. The historic buildings of Central Bedfordshire, particularly listed buildings, form an integral part of its local character and make an important contribution to furthering our understanding of the historic development of the district. Once lost or irretrievably altered, historic buildings can not be replaced, therefore the Council will make every effort to retain and protect listed buildings unless it is satisfied that the building is beyond any form of repair or retention.

3.07.20

### New Development in the Setting

The significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence and historic fabric but also from its setting – the surroundings in which it is experienced (English Heritage, The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2011). The setting of a heritage asset is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework as, “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

3.07.21

As stated in section 1, understanding the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution made by its setting should be the starting point for developing proposals affecting setting. Detailed guidance on the management of change in the setting of heritage assets has been provided by English Heritage in the publication ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (2011). This document sets out key principles for understanding setting and assessing development proposals affecting that setting. It is advised that applicants consult this document along with the English

Heritage publication ‘Seeing the History in the View’ (2011) which provides a methodology for assessing heritage assets which are the subject of formal and informal views.



Fig 3.57 Hartwells Almshouses setting



Fig 3.58 Sewell landscape character

### 3.08 Conservation Areas and their setting

#### 3.08.01

Any development within a Conservation Area or in its setting, whether it is an extension to a building, introduction of shop advertisements, alteration of shop fronts, or new development should preserve or enhance its character or appearance and any contribution made by its setting.

#### 3.08.02

As stated in section 1.4, detailed assessments of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas can be found in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal. These documents provide guidance on how change can respond positively to the character and appearance and should be consulted in the first instance when considering any proposals for change within a Conservation Area and its setting. Please contact the Conservation and Design Team for a copy of the relevant document.

#### 3.08.03

In the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal, the following guidance can be used, along with Section 3 of the Design Guide (The Character of Central Bedfordshire), to understand and assess the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### 3.08.04

### Understanding the Special Character of Conservation Area

Understanding and appreciating an area's character, including its social and economic background and the way in which such factors have shaped the settlement form, should be the starting point for making decisions about Conservation Area management and future.

#### 3.08.05

The character of a Conservation Area stems from: the landscape setting of the area, the grouping of historic buildings and the resultant spaces and sense of enclosure; the scale, design, type and materials of buildings; boundaries and the public realm; landmarks, views and vistas, and the interaction with natural features and the present and former pattern of activities and land uses.



Fig 3.59 Tingrith Conservation Area

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## 3.08.06

Traditional buildings either individually or as part of an historic street pattern or group, and the spaces between those buildings, together can create a unique sense of place, harmony and identity which is both highly pleasing and attractive. Typical traditional materials both for the buildings, boundary treatments and street surfaces also make an important contribution to both the sense of place and the important local distinctiveness of Central Bedfordshire. These include a variety of bricks from across the district, long straw thatch, plain red and orange tiles, lime plaster and timber framing.



Fig 3.60 The Dunstable townscape



Fig 3.61 Market Square, Leighton Buzzard

## 3.08.07

Trees also contribute greatly to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas as they often form part of the townscape and sense of enclosure of a place and therefore should be retained wherever possible. Conservation Area designation provides a general protection for all trees over a certain size within the designated area. Some trees are also protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). Please contact the Trees and Landscape Officer for further advice on works to trees within a Conservation Area and those covered by a TPO.



Fig 3.62 Trees in Toddington

## 3.08.08

### Minor Development

Relatively minor alterations and changes to buildings and structures, such as the removal of a redundant chimney can both individually and collectively be extremely disruptive to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Other examples include the loss of boundary walls and replacement of traditional windows with modern uPVC equivalents.

## 3.08.09

As stated previously, certain works to a dwelling within a Conservation Area will require planning permission to ensure the alterations do not detract from the special character or appearance of the area. These changes include the insertion of dormer windows and cladding or rendering the building exterior.

## 3.08.10

If considering undertaking works to a dwelling within a Conservation Area, it is advised that the Council's planning department be contacted for further information and guidance on whether planning permission is needed.

## 3.08.11

### New Development in Conservation Areas

Any proposals for new residential, town centre, or larger footprint development within a Conservation Area should have regard to the principles set out in the relevant section of this Design Guide and the guidelines set out below.



Fig 3.63 Modern materials for roofs, windows, doors, and modern utilities (gas, electricity) do not always sit well with the historic environment.



**Fig 3.64** New sympathetic development in the Conservation Area - Clipstone Mews, Barton-le-Clay



**Fig 3.65** New development in Ampthill Conservation Area



**Fig 3.66** Contemporary housing respects its historic setting

### 3.08.12

#### Guidelines for New Development in Conservation Areas

- Has the proposal considered surrounding skylines, rooflines and landmarks (e.g. church spires), or will the development have an impact on cherished view of the landscape or “signature” skylines?
- Do the plot sizes and shapes (uniform or varied for example) respond to the typical sizes and shapes of surrounding building plots?
- Does the development respond positively to the established patterns of how buildings relate to the back edge of the footpath or carriageway in the local vicinity?
- Does the development relate positively to the way buildings relate to each other in the townscape? (for example, are the buildings on the street freestanding, small informal groups of regular terraces?)
- Does the development respond to the way that buildings in the Conservation Area are linked? (with boundary walls for example)
- Have the proposed buildings taken account of the orientation of adjacent rooflines? (for example are main ridgelines parallel to the street or at right angles)

- Does the development reflect the general character and scale of the surrounding buildings? (for example, are the surrounding building 'grand' or modestly proportioned?)
- Does the development pick up on the established character of the front boundary walls, fences or mature hedgerows and trees?
- Does it maximise the retention of the above features where they are an important part of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area?
- What is the role of the proposed development within the setting? Is this a gateway or other edge development on the approach or periphery of the site? Is it a focal point development terminating a view or providing a skyline? Or is the site at a pivotal point in the townscape, turning a corner from one type of development to another?



**Fig 3.67** New development in Clophill CA

- Does the proposal pay sufficient regard to aspects of layout and provide an appropriate sense of identity and enclosure (for example, has a sequence of spaces and places been considered)?
- Does any part of the development include inappropriate elements of suburbanisation: deep or irregular house plan, fussy elevations, inappropriate spacing between buildings?
- Have the window proportions, subservience of elements such as garages, roof type or pitch, choice of materials, been chosen with regard to the character of the surrounding buildings?
- If the proposal is a contemporary solution, has it been demonstrated that it responds sympathetically and positively with its context?

### Checklist of Key Design Considerations for the Historic Environment

This list relates to the whole of the supplement and relevant sections of the Placemaking Principles Supplement.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Has a full understanding of the special interest or character of the heritage assets affected by the proposals been demonstrated?</li> <li>■ Have local materials been specified for any works of repair carried out to an historic building?</li> <li>■ Could the proposed works be considered over-restoration of a building?</li> <li>■ Is the loss of any historic fabric fully justified?</li> <li>■ Do the proposed works prioritise the repair of old work rather than the introduction of new materials?</li> <li>■ Is like for like replacement specified where a section of the original fabric is beyond repair?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Has any modern intervention to the historic environment been fully justified and is it of the highest quality?</li> <li>■ Has the concept of reversibility formed part of the decision making process?</li> <li>■ Will an Archaeological Heritage Asset assessment be required?</li> <li>■ Is an Archaeological Field Evaluation required or will a desk-based assessment suffice?</li> <li>■ Will there be any impact on archaeological remains or areas of archaeological potential?</li> <li>■ Do the development proposals take account of any issues resulting from the setting?</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### 3.09 Contacts and Further Information

#### The Conservation and Design Team, Development Management

The Conservation and Design Team are based at Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands SG17 5TQ

Email: [planning@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

#### The Archaeology Team, Development Management

The Archaeology Team are based at Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands SG17 5TQ and can be contacted on

0300 300 6029 or 0300 300 6603 or email: [archaeology@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

#### The Historic Environment Record

(HER) The Historic Environment Record can be consulted in person by prior appointment, during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. If it is not possible to visit, written, telephone or e-mail enquiries may be dealt with depending on the nature and quantity of the information required and subject to payment for any photocopies or scanning. The Record is free to use for private enquiries, but a charge is made for commercial use.

#### Contacting Us

The Historic Environment Record is held at Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands SG17 5TQ and the Historic Environment Record Team can be contacted on:

0300 300 6027 or [her@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

The digital HER is also accessible on the internet via the national Heritage Gateway website: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> However, this only serves as an introduction as it provides summary information rather than the full details, images, plans etc. available in the physical Record. It is recommended to visit the HER in person in order to derive full benefit from it.

#### References

Communities & Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework. Government National Planning Policy

English Heritage (2010) The Register of Parks and Gardens

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