

3.0.1 Introduction

3.0.1.1 This section of the document provides guidance for all stakeholders on repairs and alterations being considered to any part of the residential blocks of the Barbican Estate, in light of its listed status. Such works may arise out of a need for maintenance, repair, upgrade and also, in the case of the interiors of the flats, the desire to make changes to suit the individual requirements of the occupant.

3.0.1.2 The guidance is derived from evaluation of the character and special interest of the buildings covered in Section 2. Assessment of how any particular item of work is likely to affect the character of the building in relation to its special architectural interest informs the guidance in this section on whether the formal Listed Building Consent application procedure is required or not.

3.0.2 Procedures for proposed works and alterations

3.0.2.1 Various consents may be needed before carrying out any alterations to any part of the Barbican Estate. The procedure to be followed will vary depending on whether the applicant is an individual householder or the Corporation of London itself.

3.0.2.2 This in turn will depend upon the nature and location of the works being contemplated. Works to the exterior and common parts of the buildings will be the responsibility of the City of London Corporation. (These are dealt with in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 respectively.) Works to the flat interiors are covered in Section 3.3, and applications for planning permission or Listed Building Consent, where these are necessary, are the responsibility of the residents or their agents.

3.0.2.3 Detailed information on the procedures that must be followed by both the City Corporation and an individual applicant in relation to planning and Listed Building Consent is provided in Volume I of these Management Guidelines.

3.0.2.4 The examples of work quoted in this section seek to cover most of the types of repair and alteration that may be considered, but the lists are not exhaustive and do not override the obligations of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In any cases of doubt on the correct procedure to follow, advice should be sought from the City Corporation's Department of the Built Environment.

3.0.2.5 It should also be noted that these Guidelines do not cover other procedures or consents that may be required under other obligations arising out of the terms of leaseholds, building Regulations, etc. Guidance on these issues should be sought from the relevant authority – see Volume I, Appendix A: List of principal contacts.

3.0.3 The pressure for change

3.0.3.1 All buildings are subject to pressure for change whether this arises from the need for maintenance, repair of damage, modification and/or upgrading performance because existing users or incoming residents wish to adapt the building to suit new functions or lifestyles that were not envisaged at the time of the original design. The Barbican Estate is no exception to these pressures. The last residential block was completed in 1976 and since then much has happened to the buildings in terms of management, form of tenure, the lifestyles the buildings are expected to accommodate and changing technical performance standards relating to buildings themselves.

- 3.0.3.2 The quality of the original construction has generally ensured the buildings have continued to endure, though inevitably certain elements wear out and require replacement or particular materials or components come to the end of their serviceable life. This process, which may be unexceptionable in most buildings, raises particular issues in the context of a listed building. If elements are changed on an ad hoc basis, without an informed understanding of the buildings' significance, the original architectural character or special interest of the Estate may be steadily lost.
- 3.0.3.3 Although the examples should be checked in each specific case, it will be seen from the tables that follow, that a broad distinction can be made between works that essentially involve repairing existing fabric, and works that entail alteration. In the former case, provided the work produces a like-for-like architectural result, it is unlikely to require application for Listed Building Consent.
- 3.0.3.4 If the materials needed to effect an authentic repair are no longer obtainable or if substitution is called for because the original specification would no longer achieve a viable result, then the case may require particular consideration in relation to the formal consent procedures, depending on the extent and type of repair being undertaken. Even in such situations the work should be done in a way that still respects the key visual intentions of the original design. In general therefore repair work would be expected not to affect the character and special interest of the building.
- 3.0.3.5 With particular reference to the exterior, where works entail alteration, the question arises as to whether they may impact on the character and special architectural interest of the building. In cases where original details or material specifications have failed, there may be a need to reconsider the item in question and develop a new/improved design. In the case of a large estate such as the Barbican, the cumulative effect of small changes could be considerable if not undertaken sympathetically and systematically.
- 3.0.3.6 The coherence of the original architectural vocabulary of the Barbican has been noted in Section 2 as a distinctive aspect of its character and this has to be considered when planning remedial work. Whereas changing two or even two dozen elements like front doors or planter boxes may not make a transforming difference, soon the inconsistency becomes conspicuous and the integrity of the Estate is lost. Piecemeal departures from the original signage design would be another example of progressive loss of authentic character.
- 3.0.3.7 Individual alteration of windows could have an even greater impact. The Royal Crescent at Bath could be cited as an historical comparison – here the introduction of different windows in even a few instances would disrupt the integrity of the whole ensemble. It would be a mistake therefore to regard even routine items of maintenance or repair that might not entail Listed Building Consent for themselves as too trivial to require informed consideration and effective control, since their cumulative impact could be highly detrimental.
- 3.0.4 Managing pressure for change**
- 3.0.4.1 The City Corporation as landlord and as Estate Manager as well as all the residents, have joint and complementary roles to play in looking after the Barbican Estate and dealing with pressures for change in such a way as to preserve its unique character and quality.
- 3.0.4.2 The key criterion to be applied in the context of the external fabric and common internal parts, is that if local alterations

(even quite minor ones) affect the general character and consistency of the Estate, they are likely to be regarded as sensitive and therefore subject to Listed Building Consent. Where formal consent procedures are not triggered, it is still essential for reasons indicated above, that the works are carefully considered in the light of these guidelines, undertaken with proper care and control, and systematically recorded for the benefit of ensuring consistency of approach and for the purposes of reviewing the effectiveness of these Guidelines.

- 3.0.4.3 As regards the interiors of individual flats -as these are also included in the listing- while alterations or maintenance work to the internal fabric may not affect the communal identity of the Estate, such work must still be assessed for its potential impact on the special interest of the building. These Guidelines seek to ensure that there is reasonable scope for internal alteration provided it is managed within the proposed framework.
- 3.0.4.4 In all cases it is important that alterations are undertaken sensitively so that the specification and installation of new components are compatible with the original architectural design intent of the buildings. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to renewing items on a like-for-like basis. If that is not possible then new elements or appliances should be chosen to be compatible with the original intention of the building.
- 3.0.4.5 Where renewal is due to technical failure of an original product or constructional detail and this entails upgrade, the work should still accord with the visual character of the original.
- 3.0.4.6 The importance of a systematic maintenance programme for a significant listed Estate such as the Barbican cannot be overestimated. There needs to be a programme of regular monitoring and maintenance of the external fabric and common

areas so that the quality and value of the buildings are maintained.

- 3.0.4.7 The best practice section of these Management Guidelines is intended to assist the Estate Office, in consultation with residents, to implement such maintenance regimes in a systematic manner taking into account the special architectural importance of the buildings. Single elements of the building should always be assessed in the context of the whole, and reference should always be made to the character and special interest as described in Section 2 when preparing any contract of repair and refurbishment.
- 3.0.4.8 Current and future management regimes will need to be familiar with the Guidelines in order to avoid the risk of any uninformed interventions and insensitive repair to the external fabric of the buildings. The documentation and maintenance of proper work records has a vital part to play in embedding best practice and facilitating the review process.
- 3.0.5 Cultivating a tradition of care**
- 3.0.5.1 Whereas those involved in the care and upkeep of an ancient or historic structure will be predisposed to approach the task with a 'conservation mindset', requiring specialist knowledge or working protocols, such an approach may not be so readily assumed in the case of modern buildings.

The statutory listing of significant post-war architecture is still relatively recent and the widespread acceptance or appreciation of its special interest cannot yet be taken for granted. Such circumstances can result in either casual or incremental disfigurement of buildings through improvised or merely pragmatic repairs and alterations. The listing of the Barbican Estate creates the opportunity to cultivate a new tradition of care

informed by these Management Guidelines. Yet this process cannot necessarily be expected to happen of its own accord - it will need to be assisted by active observance of the protocols laid down in this document by all the parties concerned.