

Information Guide
for the 2nd Survey
of Historic Buildings

Listed Historic Buildings of Northern Ireland

Historic
Environment
Division



DfC

Department
for Communities
www.communities-n

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

The Principles of Conservation

In 1931, the Athens Charter first laid down the agreed international principles of conservation. The charter was reviewed and updated in 1964 as the Venice Charter. The Venice Charter stresses the need to understand what is important about each protected building before considering how to conserve or alter it. This means that an accurate architectural and historic record is essential. In England an initial survey was

carried out starting in 1947 and, with the Venice Charter, a revision of the list was started in 1964.

The protection of such buildings began later in Northern Ireland starting in the early 1970s. This late start resulted in the loss of some significant buildings and structures because of an increase in redevelopment in the 1960s. The First Survey took around twenty years to complete.

By the end of the First Survey in 1994, the information being recorded was more detailed. Some building types that had





DUBLIN
70
DROMORE
4
LISBURN
3



been less appreciated, such as vernacular buildings, were, even during the course of the First Survey, becoming increasingly scarce just as their true heritage value was being recognised.

The Second Survey

The Second Survey started in 1997. Initially, areas were surveyed in the same sequence as the First Survey. Now that

the Survey is based on Council areas as a whole, HED also looks at planning activity and geographical spread to determine which area to survey next.

From time to time a member of the public may contact HED with a 'Listing Query' if they believe that a building should be listed. If the building is not within the geographical area currently being Second Surveyed and has not been evaluated previously, or if new evidence



is presented to HED which demonstrates that the building may be of special architectural and historic interest, the building may be surveyed and considered for listing.

Fieldwork survey and historical research are carried out by HED architects and historians. Generally, access to buildings and property is by invitation and appointment. The Second Survey team are authorised by the Department for Communities

to enter any land or building for the purposes of amending the List as described in Section 80 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. This important Act acknowledges the special protection afforded to buildings which meet the legislative tests for listing; indeed any person wilfully obstructing a person acting in connection with surveying any building in connection with a proposal to include the building in, or exclude it from, a list compiled under

Section 80 shall be guilty of an offence, and liable on summary to a conviction of a fine.

Surveyors undertake the Second Survey fieldwork and accompanying historical research. Records are more detailed than those of the First Survey and as comprehensive as possible within the survey timetable. They include a description of the whole building, inside as well as out, and of its setting. Once all the relevant information has been gathered, the buildings are evaluated relative to published criteria.

The Historic Buildings Council and district councils are then consulted on any amendments (additions and deletions) to the List and owners informed. Its comments are considered. After a final evaluation, the owners and District Council are notified of buildings being added to or taken off the list. Surveys of buildings that do not end up as listed but are recorded as having some interest are kept so that the widest pool of information is

available to inform and educate about the historic environment. A full description and flow chart describing the process of listing can be found at the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division website: www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/listing-process

There is no formal appeal process for an owner but HED staff are happy to discuss and explain the reasons for their decisions.

The listing criteria

Throughout the First Survey, the listing criteria - reasons for listing - were developed continually, as the understanding of our built heritage changed over time.

The test for assessing a building's 'listability' is whether or not it has 'special architectural or historic interest'. The criteria set out below are used by HED to ensure a consistent approach and to help



others, including owners and researchers, to understand why a building is considered special enough to be protected.

These criteria are published online: www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements/pps6_-_revised_annex_c__criteria_for_listing.pdf

The older a building is, the greater the historical perspective it allows and the fewer examples remain. Generally, buildings under 30 years old are not considered for listing unless they are of outstanding quality. Under architectural interest,

style, proportion ornamentation, plan form, spatial organisation, structural system, innovatory qualities, degree of alteration, quality and survival of interiors, setting, group value, age and authenticity, are all considered.

Under historic interest, historic importance, historic associations, authorship, Northern Ireland/ international interest, local interest, social, cultural and economic importance and rarity are assessed.

Normally a listed building will meet some of the architectural interest criteria as well as being

of local or national interest. National interest refers to the context of Northern Ireland. Listed buildings are graded A, B+, B1 or B2 with A being the highest grade.

Removing Buildings from the list – ‘de-listing’

Buildings may be considered for de-listing using the same listing criteria as found in Annex ‘C’ of PPS6. New evidence to suggest



why the building no longer meets the statutory tests may be presented at any time to HED. A team of architects and historians then evaluates this information and may or may not find that a building no longer satisfies one or more criteria for which it was listed. If insufficient criteria remain for the building to be retained on the list, HED then consults with the Historic Buildings Council and the relevant local Council before amending or adding to the List.

Why do we list?

The List is made to identify our architectural heritage and protect it. There are several important reasons for listing the best. Every era has produced buildings of quality and listing protects the best examples. Historic buildings are material evidence of how people lived in the past – both buildings and scheduled monuments providing a visual and physical record of man’s occupation of this island from the earliest of times.



Great buildings give a sense of place and help reinforce local and national identity. They can even provide a useful source of reference for architects designing the architecture of today.

The statutory list

The Legislation under which the Department 'lists' buildings is contained within the Planning (NI) Act 2011. Section 80(1) of this Order states 'the Department shall compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and may amend any list so compiled'. Under Section 80(7) such structures are to be known as a 'listed building'. Special architectural or historic interest is therefore the legislative test to which all new listing

proposals must be compared. Once listed, a building is, in an increasingly competitive world, given legal protection to ensure that its special interest is considered in decisions to do with its future. Listed Building Consent (LBC) is required from the local council to carry out any works – both internal or external – which may affect its character as a listed building. It also applies to proposals to demolish all or part of a listed building. It is a criminal offence to do anything without the necessary permission. Applications for Listed Building Consent are made to the local Council – forms and more information on applying for LBC can be found by searching for 'listed building consent' at www.planningni.gov.uk.

What can be listed?

It is a common mistake to think that only the front façade of a building is listed. Listing covers the complete building, inside and out and extends to fixtures and free standing objects within the curtilage of the building. The local council planning authority determines whether LBC and/or Planning Permission are required in any particular case. Where changes to a listed building are being considered it is good practice to discuss

the proposals with the council planning authority and the Department for Communities: Historic Environment Division before the design is developed. HED recommends that, where an owner proposes work or changes, they employ accredited consultants experienced in this specialist field.

Listing is not confined to buildings. Practically any man-made structure may be listed and the List demonstrates this: fountains, telephone boxes, lighthouses, post boxes and ice houses are all included.



Where can the List be seen?

The List can be viewed on the Department for Communities web site at

www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/listed-buildings

by clicking on the 'Northern Ireland Buildings Database'.

Copies of the list can also be viewed in the National Monuments and Buildings Record in the Klondyke Building, The Gasworks, Belfast, as well as in local libraries. Local Councils also hold copies of the List for their areas.

What does listing mean?

As well as identifying the most important historic buildings, the purpose of listing is to protect the character of a listed building and its setting. This does not mean that it must remain unchanged from the day it was listed or be returned to its original state. We understand that every



building has to have a function to survive and that some buildings undergo changes of use that often require change. HED and other accredited experts offer advice to owners on why it is listed, how best to care for their building and how it may be changed. This includes advice on how to ensure that changes do not harm its essential character; the acceptability of proposed works; and information on historically correct materials and detailing.



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