

## 7 CONSERVATION

### Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

#### What is a listed building?

Listing helps us acknowledge and understand our shared history. It marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that some thought will be taken about its future.

Listing is not a preservation order, preventing change. Listing is an identification stage where buildings are marked and celebrated as having exceptional architectural or historic special interest, before any planning stage which may decide a building's future.

Listing does not freeze a building in time; it simply means that listed building consent must be applied for in order to make any changes to that building which might affect its special interest. Listed buildings can be altered and extended. The Methodist Church, through the Ecclesiastical Exemption uses listed building consent to make decisions that balance the site's historic significance against other issues such as its function, condition or viability.

#### How do I find out if my building is listed?

The Methodist Church employs a Conservation Officer who can confirm whether your church building is a listed building or an unlisted building in a conservation area. You can also find out by consulting [The National Heritage List for England](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/) (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>), or for chapels in Wales and Scotland you can contact Cadw and Historic Scotland respectively. Alternatively, please contact the local planning authority.

### How Are Buildings Chosen?

Buildings and structures are assessed to define their significance with the greatest care. Many old buildings and indeed recent buildings are interesting, but listing identifies only those which are of national 'special interest'. The main criteria used are:

- Age and rarity: most buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most of those built between 1700 and 1840. The criteria become tighter with time, so that buildings built within the last 30 years have to be exceptionally important to be listed, and under threat too. A building has to be over 10 years old to be eligible for listing
- Architectural interest: buildings which are nationally important for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship; also important examples of particular building types and techniques.
- Historic interest: this includes buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history
- Close historical association with nationally important people or events
- Group value, especially where buildings are part of an important architectural or historic group or are a fine example of planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages)

### What Happens When a Building is Proposed for listed building status?

The Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for the list of listed buildings. However, the assessment for including or delisting church buildings is carried out by English Heritage, Cadw and Historic Scotland. They operate a new consultation process to make listing more open and transparent and they will consult with the applicant, owner or denomination responsible for the building. Requests can come through to the Connexional Conservation Officer but these are always shared with the Managing Trustees.

Further information on the process can be found here:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/consultation-process/>

### Which part of the building is listed?

Each listed building has an accompanying list description. However, this description is used for identification purposes only, and is not an extensive list of all those items that are listed. You should consider that the whole of the building is listed, and this includes both the interior and exterior of the building.

Fixtures and curtilage buildings - ie. Any object or structure which is fixed to the building, or is within the curtilage and forms part of the land and has done so since before July 1948 - are also treated as part of the building for the purposes of listed building control.

Special Permission when carrying out a project to a listed building

Any works of repair (that constitute alteration), alteration, extension or demolition of a church, which would affect its significance or character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, will require listed building consent or its equivalent.

It is often unclear when consent is required for works to a listed building. The Connexional Conservation Officer can give the church advice and we encourage Managing Trustees to contact us at the earliest convenience to discuss the works and the need for consent.

The Methodist Church operates its own system of internal control when giving listed building consent as it, along with five other exempted denominations, operates under the Ecclesiastical Exemption.

### Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Conservation areas are recognised for the contribution they make to the cultural heritage and economic well being of the country and to the locality.

Given the abundance and importance of many non-conformist ecclesiastical buildings in historic areas it is common to find they are located within the boundaries of designated conservation areas. Such areas are designated by the local planning authority and confirmation of whether a building is in a conservation area can be obtained by contacting the local Conservation Officer. Alternatively, the Connexional Conservation Officer can assist with this.

If your church building is located within a conservation area then there may be restrictions on what you can and cannot do to the building, although this is largely restricted to the exterior of the building only (SO 931(1)(x)). We therefore encourage you to speak with the Connexional Conservation Officer at your earliest convenience if you are considering undertaking a project to the exterior of the building. This also includes works of demolition to an unlisted church building in a conservation area.

### Local Listing

Your church may have been notified by the local planning authority that it intends to include it in their list of locally listed buildings. Local lists play an essential role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment. Local lists can be used to identify significant local heritage assets to support the development of Local Plans.

Encouraging the use of local lists aims to strengthen the role of local heritage assets as a material consideration in the planning process. Consequently, once your building has been included on the local list you may find that restrictions apply to any proposed works of alteration, extension or demolition. We advise you to contact the local planning authority to clarify any such restrictions.

## General Principles

When considering works to listed buildings it is best practice to work with the commonly adopted conservation principles:

- the historic environment is a shared resource
- everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
- understanding the significance of places is vital
- significant places should be managed to sustain their values
- decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
- documenting and learning from decisions is essential

The principles respond to the need for a clear, over-arching philosophical framework of what conservation means at the beginning of the 21st Century. The idea of 'significance' lies at the core of these principles. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.

'Conservation Principles' sets out a method for thinking systematically and consistently about the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place. People value historic places in many different ways; 'Conservation Principles' shows how they can be grouped into four categories:

**Evidential value:** the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

**Historical value:** the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative.

**Aesthetic value:** the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

**Communal value:** the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

There is a really useful guidance note produced by English Heritage which should be read when a church is considering undertaking works to a historic place of worship. The guidance is titled: *New Work in Historic Places of Worship* and can be found here:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/new-work-in-historic-places-of-worship/>

#### What do I need to include with my application?

All applications for listed building consent or conservation area consent should be accompanied by detailed plans, photographs a Statement of Need and a Statement of Significance, examples of which can be found on the Methodist Church website. A full explanation of these documents can be found under Item 1. below.

For information on the following please follow the relevant links. The guidance notes can be found on the Methodist church website under the Conservation Section:

- i. Statements of significance and need:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/technical-and-conservation/conservation-information-leaflets>
- ii. Disability access provision in historic chapels:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/accessforhistoricbuildings.pdf>
- iii. Listed buildings: photographic records and archives:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/archivecondition.pdf>
- iv. Removal of pews from historic chapels:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/removalpews.pdf>
- v. Replacement windows in historic buildings:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/windowreplacement.pdf>
- vi. Flowcharts showing the consultation process:  
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/property/technical-and-conservation/flow-diagrams>

vii. Window protection for historic buildings:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/rm/windowprotect.pdf>

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