Informal Guidance Note

SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR WORK TO LISTED BUILDINGS AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS IN WEST LANCASHIRE

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WEST LANCASHIRE REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN

INFORMAL GUIDANCE NOTE

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Preface

This leaflet provides informal guidance for the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan. It provides advice relating to Policy EN4 of the Replacement Local Plan and has been approved by West Lancashire District Council for Development Control purposes.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this guidance please contact either Ian Bond (Heritage and Environment Manager) on 01695 585167 or Cyllene Griffiths (Conservation Officer) on 01695 585102.
Introduction

This leaflet is an informal guide to specification requirements for work to Listed Buildings and Historic Buildings in Conservation Areas. For more detailed guidance on repair techniques, see “The Repair of Historic Buildings: Advice on Principles and Methods” by Christopher Brereton and “Practical Building Conservation (5 vols)” by John and Nicola Ashurst. These are available from English Heritage postal sales on 01761 452966. Guidance notes produced by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) are available on 020 7377 1644.

The Principles of Repair

1. The primary purpose of repair is to restrain the process of decay without damaging the character of the building, altering the features which give them their historic or architectural importance, or unnecessarily disturbing or destroying historic fabric.

2. Intervention through repair must be kept to the minimum required to stabilise and conserve buildings, with the aim of achieving a sufficiently sound structure to ensure their long-term survival and to meet the requirements of any appropriate use.

3. The authenticity of an historic building depends crucially on its design and on the integrity of its fabric. The unnecessary replacement of historic fabric, no matter how carefully the work is carried out, will have an adverse effect on the appearance of the building, will seriously diminish its authenticity and will significantly reduce its value as a source of historic information.

4. Repairs should be executed honestly, with no attempt at disguise or artificial ageing, but should not be unnecessarily obtrusive or unsympathetic.

5. A programme of repairs may offer the opportunity for removing, after recording, features which are no intrinsic value in themselves. The full implications of doing so must be carefully considered in advance, and potential aesthetic gains must be balanced against the loss of historic integrity.

6. A programme of repair may offer the opportunity for reinstatement of replaced structural elements or lost non-structural elements, provided that sufficient evidence exists for accurate replacement, and no loss of historic fabric occurs. Speculative reconstruction is normally unjustified.

Re-roofing

Roof works should be comprehensive and any necessary associated repairs (e.g. to the roof structure, lead-work, or rainwater goods) should be undertaken at the same time. Details of new roof windows or skylights, roof
vents, flue terminals, soil and vent pipes, aerials, or solar panels should be approved before work starts.

Re-slatting

Re-slatting should be carried out reusing sound existing slates and/or new natural slates to match the existing ones, fixed with copper nails to battens that have been fixed with stainless steel nails. Reclaimed and new materials should not, however, be mixed on the same pitch. The slates if possible should be of British origin and appropriate to the region (e.g. Welsh or Westmoreland slates) laid in courses to match the existing ones. Detailing should be reinstated carefully to the original form, particularly at eaves, ridges and verges. Existing ridges and hip tiles or slates should be retained and reset where possible, or should be replaced in slate, clay, or stone to match the existing ones. Verges, ridges and hip tiles, and other features should be pointed neatly in gauged mortar, no stronger than 1:1:6 mix (cement: lime: sand). New lead flashings should be provided at all abutments and chimneys (cement fillets alone are not acceptable) and lead-work should be checked and renewed or repaired as necessary. Methods of roof space(s) ventilation should be agreed.

Re-tiling

Re-tiling should be carried out reusing sound existing clay tiles, plus additional new tiles as required, fixed with copper nails to battens that have been fixed with stainless steel nails. Reclaimed and new materials should not be mixed on the same pitch. New tiles should be of natural clay to match the existing ones in type, colour and texture (e.g. handmade plain tiles or pan tiles) as closely as possible and laid in similar courses. Detailing generally should be reinstated carefully to the original form, particularly at eaves, ridges and verges. Existing ridge and hip tiles should be retained and reset where possible, or should be replaced to match the existing, particularly if of a decorative pattern. Pointing to ridge and hip tiles should be done in a gauged mortar no stronger than 1:1:16 mix (cement: lime: sand). New lead flashings should be provided to all abutments and chimneys (cement fillings alone are not acceptable) and lead-work generally should be checked and renewed or repaired as necessary. Methods of roof space(s) ventilation should be agreed.

Stone Slating

Stone slates are a valuable and diminishing resource. Loss on stripping a roof is inevitable, and therefore complete re-covering of a stone slated roof should not be undertaken unnecessarily. Where unavoidable, stone-slated roofs should be recovered in good quality stone slates, reusing existing slates as much as possible. If replacement slates are required, these should be new, where quarries exist and new slates can be obtained, or sound second-hand natural stone slates to match the existing in size, colour and texture as closely as possible. The slates should be re-laid in graduated (diminishing) courses and fixed with oak pegs or non-ferrous nails. Detailing generally should be reinstated carefully to the original form, particularly to valleys, dormers, eaves
and verges. New artificial or reconstructed “stone” slates of any type are not normally acceptable. Pointing, lead-work and ventilation should follow the guidelines described under re-slating and re-tiling above.

**Re-thatching**

Unless likely to be of intrinsic historic interest (e.g. medieval thatch showing evidence of smoke-blackening), existing thatched roofs should be stripped completely, or to a sound base and re-thatched to match the existing to a minimum depth of 300mm (12in). Particular attention should be given to reinstating the original form of detailing at verges, eaves, and ridges, appropriate to the type of thatch used (e.g. Norfolk reed or combed wheat straw). Ridges should be finished as simply as possible consistent with the age and type of the roof, and not worked unnecessarily into elaborate shapes. Dormer windows should also be finished as simply as possible.

**Chimneys**

Chimneys requiring repair should be reinstated or rebuilt accurately to the original height and profile, in materials to match the existing ones (stone, brick or rendered masonry, as appropriate). Re-pointing or rebuilding should be carried out as described in separate sections below. Original details, including style of chimney pots, should also be reinstated wherever possible.

**Lead-work**

All flashings, soakers, cappings, valley and gutter linings, and other weatherings, should be in lead, to the weights and details recommended by the Lead Sheet Association, as described in the “Lead Sheet Manual” and its latest addendum. Unless otherwise agreed, flat roof coverings, including coverings to internal wells and dormer windows, should also be in lead. Appropriate provision should be made for ventilation below the lead, particularly where thermal conditions are likely to change (e.g. where insulation or a new heating system has been installed).

**Rainwater Goods**

Generally, any new or replacement rainwater goods required should be in cast iron, to the original pattern. Cats aluminium gutters are acceptable in cases where the original section is no longer obtainable in cast-iron. Getters and rainwater goods originally of a different material, such as lead, stone or timber, should be replaced accordingly, unless otherwise agreed.

**Structural Timber Repairs**

Repairs to structural timber should be made by splicing in sound replacement timber of similar scantling and species wherever possible, retaining all existing timber of historic value. Replacement timber should be new green oak (e.g. for new elements) or kiln-dried oak (e.g. for face patching and similar small repairs). Second-hand material should not be used. No surface treatment
should be applied to exposed new oak frame elements. Specialist advice should be sought concerning any existing timber-carrying decoration likely to be of historic importance. A detailed specification and drawings should be approved for the repair or reinstatement of a timber-framed building or historic roof building before any work is undertaken. It is expected that these will be based on a careful and comprehensive survey of the existing structure. Any mechanical repair methods proposed to structural timbers should be approved by the Council, as should the overall structural proposals. Large sections of timber required for replacement should not be formed by laminating smaller sections. Generally, “in situ” resin repairs to structural timbers are not acceptable. It is important to maintain flexibility at joints in order to allow for some movement in the frame. Shakes in structural timbers should not be filled for cosmetic reasons. All infill panels of historic interest (e.g. wattle and daub) should be retained wherever possible. The form and detailing of any new infill panels required should be agreed. If previously covered by lime render, repaired timber framing should be re-rendered and not exposed.

**Stonework Repairs**

Repairs to stonework should be carried out in natural stone to match the existing in both colour and texture, obtained, where possible, from the same quarry as the original. A detailed specification for the stone to be used must be agreed before work starts, and samples of any new stone to be used should be approved. Generally, stone that has lost its structural quality or is badly decayed should be carefully cut out and matching replacement stone pieced in. Replacement stone should be cut to the full dimensions of the existing blocks, unless otherwise agreed, and face patches should never be less than 100mm deep. The face of new stone should be tooled to match the original un-weathered finish, and all saw marks should be removed. Stone should always be laid on its natural bed unless otherwise specified, and new stonework should be laid to match the existing wall (e.g. as ashlar work or course squared rubble). All replacement stone details should be cut accurately from the original pattern and profile. This is particularly important for cornices, mullions, hood moulds and other architectural features. Where the existing stone is badly eroded, replacement details should be agreed before work starts. Dressing off should be limited to the removal of dangerous or loose material, and should be carried out with a bristle brush. Chisels, particularly claw chisels, should never be used. Areas of unsound stonework should be carefully rebuilt as agreed, reusing as much of the existing stone as possible. Unless otherwise approved, resin-based in situ “plastic” repairs to stonework are not acceptable, except for small areas.

**Stonework re-pointing**

Stonework should be re-pointed or bedded in an appropriate lime mortar (that is, one weaker than the adjacent masonry) and generally never stronger than a 1:1:16 mix (cement: lime: sand), a mix of 1:2:9 would be appropriate for soft stone and exposed areas; or a 1:3 lime: sand mix, particularly for limestone; or a 1:3:12 for internal work. The use of putty lime, rather than hydrated lime, should be encouraged, as should the preparation of course stuff (i.e. mixed
sand and lime, kept covered until needed). The colour of the new mortar, which should match the original mortar before weathering, should be provided by the use of appropriate sand. Proprietary coloured mixes or colouring pigments should not be used. Joints should be carefully raked out manually to a depth of between 25mm and 40mm, depending upon the width of the joint, and flushed out with clean water. Cutting out of existing mortar with mechanical disks is not acceptable. The joints should be solidly filed with new mortars as far back as possible between the stones and finished flush, and then brushed back with a bristle brush to expose the aggregate and edges of the adjacent stone. Joints should on no account be struck, or finished proud of the masonry face to form “strap” or “ribbon” pointing, or feathered over the edge of the eroded blocks. Where the existing stone is generally eroded, the face of the mortar should be kept back to the point at which the joint remains the original width. Re-pointing should not increase the width of the original joints.

Brickwork Repairs

Decayed or damaged bricks should be cut out and carefully replaced with sound bricks to match the existing type, colour and texture. Where structurally necessary, agreed areas of unsound brickwork should be carefully rebuilt, reusing the existing bricks where possible. Unless otherwise agreed, resin based, in situ “plastic” repairs to brickwork are not acceptable.

Brickwork re-pointing

Re-pointing of external brickwork should be kept to the absolute minimum that is structurally necessary. Comprehensive re-pointing for cosmetic reasons is not acceptable. The joints should be finished to match the surrounding work and the width of the original joints should not be increased. Re-pointing and any necessary rebuilding of existing brickwork should be carried out in an appropriate lime mortar (that is, one weaker than the adjacent bricks) generally no stronger than a 1:1:16 mix (cement: lime: sand). Detailed advice about mortar mixes and lime for use in re-pointing brickwork is as described under “Stonework re-pointing” above. The joints should be carefully raked out manually to a depth of at least 18-25mm (3/4in-1in), depending upon the width of the joints, flushed out with clean water, and the new mortar pressed well in. Cutting out of existing joints (e.g. lined out or tuck pointed), or, unless otherwise agreed, finished flush (not struck or raised), neatly and cleanly, with the mortar brushed back as described under “Stonework re-pointing”, above, to expose the edges of the adjacent bricks. Mortar for re-pointing should be coloured by the use of an appropriate sand to match the original joints before weathering. Proprietary coloured mixes or colouring additives should not be used.

External Cleaning

External cleaning of brickwork or stonework, if agreed to be appropriate, should be carried out to an approved detailed specification. Acceptable techniques will include cleaning by low-pressure water washing, assisted by
bristle brushing and, in certain circumstances, a proprietary chemical cleaning system appropriate to the surface and applied strictly in accordance with the manufacturers instructions. The latter technique is not appropriate for sandstone, however, which generally should not be cleaned. Cleaning should always be undertaken by a specialist conservation contractor. No abrasive or high-pressure cleaning techniques should be used, particularly unregulated grit or sand blasting. Cleaned surfaces should not be treated with any form of sealant or silicone water repellent.

Rendering

Re-rendering and render repairs generally should be carried out in a lime mortar mix no stronger than 1:1:16 (cement: lime: sand); a weaker mix of 1:2:9 or 1:3 lime: sand may be appropriate on a soft background, or in unexposed positions. The mix chosen should match the strength of the original rendering or stucco, unless otherwise agreed. New rendering should be applied in three coats, and no metal beads or stops should be used externally. Arrises and angles should be formed in the traditional manner. Cracks in existing render should be cut back to the masonry face and the surrounding render undercut to provide a key. Cornices, window surrounds and other mouldings should be rerun in situ with a template in the traditional manner, to the full organic profile, and accurately formed. It is important for all existing features requiring repair to be recorded by photographs, drawings and templates, if necessary, before work starts. Mouldings should be copied from an undamaged existing selection cleaned of paint. Other decorative features should be reinstated in areas of new render, where appropriate. Subsequent redecoration of rendered areas should be done with traditional lime wash or mineral pigments, where appropriate, otherwise a smooth, water permeable masonry paint system. Textured or impermeable sprayed coatings are not acceptable. The proposed colour scheme for redecoration should be agreed.

Windows and Doors

Existing windows and/or external doors should be retained and carefully repaired wherever possible. It is important to retain and repair surviving early casements. If replacement is unavoidable, the new windows should be accurate replicas to the original design, in both pattern and detail. Timber sections, especially mouldings, should be to the original profile; this is of particular importance for glazing bars and meeting rails to horizontal sashes. Double-hung sliding sashes should be without horns (unless the original sashes were to this pattern) and should be hung on cords with weights. Spring balances for sashes are not acceptable. Details of any new windows proposed, which do not replicate original or existing windows, should not be agreed. When an architecturally significant building is concerned, a sample window for approval may be required. Existing old, especially crown, glass should be retained and reused in new windows, as replacement with modern float glass will always adversely affect the appearance of the window. New door and window furniture should be to the original pattern. New and/or
repaired external joinery should be painted with a gloss paint system (unless otherwise agreed) and not stained.

**Ironwork**

Decorative ironwork, such as balconies, canopies or railings, should be carefully repaired or, if absolutely necessary reinstated accurately to the existing pattern and detail, in a similar material (unless otherwise agreed). Existing decorative ironwork requiring repair or replacement should be recorded by photographs or drawings before work starts, and the existing paint finish analysed to determine the original colour scheme. Drawings for any new or replacement ironwork will be required for approval. New or repaired ironwork should be painted with a gloss paint system, to the original colour scheme. Any alternative colour scheme proposed should be agreed.

**External Works**

Boundary walls, fences and gates should be repaired to match the existing, or reinstated to the original design. The installation and design of any such elements must be approved. External paving should be in appropriate natural materials, such as York stone or granite setts, to match the existing where relevant and/or laid in the traditional manner. A detailed scheme for any external landscaping proposed, including any planting, lighting, signage and street furniture, should be submitted for approval.

**Special Features or Materials**

Where unusual features or materials special to the building or area exist or are required, the specification for their repair or reinstatement should be required.

The owner, or owner’s agent, should make sure that these conditions are drawn to the attention of the contractor(s) who will carry out the work.