**Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and**

**Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)**

**(Planning Guidance Note)**

The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is a European Union (EU) Directive (European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive) with the aim of improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions of buildings. This Directive and its requirements are still in force, despite the UK leaving the EU. This Directive legally requires that a residential building should achieve the minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES) and EPC rating Band E if it is being sold or rented. **However, the Directive provides exemptions to the energy efficiency requirements for ‘*designated environments*’ and includes listed buildings and conservation areas and in particular undesignated buildings within conservation areas.** The exemption applies where the ‘*minimum energy performance requirements would unacceptably alter*’a listed buildingand its architectural interest and character or the appearance of a conservation area. This exemption is consistent with the exemptions for listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas in Part L of the building regulations (The Conservation of Fuel and Power).

However, there are some concerns and uncertainty as to what works would constitute unacceptable alterations and this brief guidance note aims to provide some clarity for listed building owners or those that own buildings located in a conservation area. Listed buildings and conservation areas, as designated heritage assets, are legally protected by the primary legislation: Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In the case of listed buildings the Act requires that any works of alteration preserve the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Works of alterations that have an impact on this interest require **listed building consent**. In the case of conservation areas, there is a requirement for development to preserve or enhance the area.

As a Local Planning Authority (LPA), we can offer detailed advice through our **pre-application service** to assist homeowners as to what energy efficiency measures require listed building consent or planning permission. Each building and situation has to be judged on its own merits and specific requirements. For instance, listed buildings can differ and vary considerably in terms of their construction, building materials, location, authenticity, completeness, sensitivity and therefore ability to accommodate changes in relation to energy efficiency measures. However, this does not mean that it will be impossible to make alterations that would improve their energy efficiency, and it is often the case that traditionally constructed buildings are inherently energy efficient, and therefore only modest alterations might be needed to achieve a higher EPC rating.

You have many options which don’t need listed building consent, and that can significantly improve the efficiency of the building, while avoiding visual or physical harm. Our published Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) guidance***: Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Guidance for Listed Buildings and Undesignated Historic Buildings*** and the ***Sustainable Construction and Retrofitting*** SPDs offer detailed advice.

The protected status of heritage does not mean it’s impossible to make energy efficiency improvements, and the level and scale of alteration which is acceptable will differ from one building and situation to another.