

# Locally Listed Buildings in Watford



**Revised and Updated 2018**



## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Watford Borough contains a number of buildings that do not merit statutory listing under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, but are of architectural and/or historic value. As part of the Council's Urban Conservation Strategy, the Council is of the view that the contribution that these buildings make to the history, character, streetscape and identity of Watford is worthy of protection. For this reason, Buildings of Local Interest were identified and listed in the Watford District Plan 2000, and Policy U15 was included to indicate that development adversely affecting these buildings will be resisted:-

### *Policy U15*

*Proposals for development affecting the appearance, character or setting of Buildings of Local Interest should ensure that due regard is paid to safeguarding the relevant features of the building and its setting. Proposals that involved the demolition of the building are unlikely to be approved.*

This policy is one of the Saved Policies from the Watford 2000 Local Plan and should be read alongside the Adopted Core Strategy Policies (2013). The Council is currently reviewing the Local Plan Documents and the new Local Plan is expected to be adopted in late 2020.

1.2 Buildings of Local Interest are located throughout Watford, with a notable concentration along The Parade, High Street and Lower High Street. Some of the buildings are situated within Conservation Areas and are subject to the relevant planning policies concerning those designations, as well as Policy U15. Protection for those that are not within Conservation Areas will be reliant upon the implementation of Policy U15. The contents of the list of Buildings of Local Interest will also be included on the Historic Environment Record maintained by Hertfordshire County Council. Whilst this will not increase the level of protection afforded to the buildings, it will reinforce and aid the recognition of their contribution to the wider historic environment.

1.3 In July 2018 the Government published an updated National Planning Policy Framework which sets out all the national policies in respect of planning policy<sup>1</sup>. Section 16 of this document contains policies relating to the historic environment. Additional good practice

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

guidance is contained in Historic England Advice Note 7<sup>2</sup> on Local Heritage Listing. The NPPF refers to the importance of Local Planning Authorities maintaining an up to date record of all heritage assets in their area and the role the planning process has in their future protection. The designation of locally listed buildings is a key way to understand and conserve local heritage assets.

1.4 In addition, this document contributes to the evidence base for the wider delivery of the Local Plan.

## **2.0 Drawing up the list**

2.1 The majority of buildings included in the list of Buildings of Local Interest were identified in a study commissioned by Watford Borough Council, entitled 'Watford: Character of Area Study'. The Study was undertaken in 1999 by BEAMS (Built Environment Advisory and Management Service). The list of buildings that followed from this research was included as Appendix 6 of the Watford District Plan 2000 and as part of the District Plan was subject to extensive public consultation before it was adopted in 2003.

2.2 The 2010 document resulted from the reappraisal of the then existing list of Buildings of Local Interest – in line with up-to-date government guidance on the conservation of built heritage.

2.3 The 2018 review has allowed the 2010 list to be updated in terms of some changes to the information we have and to remove some buildings which have been upgraded and included on the National list or demolished to allow justified and consented development to proceed. Alongside this, there are some suggestions for further additions to the Local List which have been guided by recommendations from the Council's Planning department as well as its Heritage department, the County Council's Heritage Department, local history groups, local residents' associations, the general public and BEAMS.

## **3.0 The criteria for Local Listing**

3.1 Buildings were included on the list if they met one or more of the following criteria:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>

- Architectural Interest – the style, form, type, or construction is of interest. It may be unusual, or may be a good example of a typical building in the locality;
- Function – the building’s function may be specialised by forming part of the original layout/facilities of the area of which it is part (e.g. small workshops);
- Historical Interest – the building forms a significant part of the development of the town or a locality;
- Landmark quality – a building with a location, scale, and/or features that contribute to the identity and distinctiveness of the built environment;
- Streetscape quality – the building forms an important component of a particular street, lending it structure, variety, or particular character.

#### **4.0 What Part of a Building is Protected?**

4.1 The extent of protection afforded to Buildings of Local Interest is limited to the effect of development on their external appearance and setting. In most instances the contribution to the history, character, and streetscape of these buildings is dependent on the visual presence of the building and its setting. While the internal features of the buildings may be worthy of retention, it is not possible to control alterations to these.

#### **5.0 What are the Buildings to be Protected From?**

5.1 The Government has prescribed permitted development rights for certain activities, as outlined in the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. If a proposal meets the criteria outlined in this Order then it is deemed to have planning permission. Permitted development rights permit, amongst other works, certain alterations to dwellinghouses (including their curtilage), schools, industrial buildings and shops. Buildings of Local Interest may be susceptible to alterations and even demolition in the future as these permitted rights limit the control that Watford Borough Council has to protect them.

5.2 The Council has the ability to remove permitted development rights via Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The council has chosen to remove some permitted development rights for some locally listed buildings on the list adopted in 2010. This was done for the following reasons:

- Where a locally listed building lies outside a conservation area to prevent the building being demolished without permission and to manage the nature of a number of small scale alterations such as replacement windows and alterations to the roof so that these changes do not have a negative impact on the building's character.
- Where a locally listed building lies in a conservation area and demolition is not permitted development, the council has used the directions to manage the nature of the small scale changes which are permitted and which could have a negative impact on the character of the buildings and the conservation area. Permitted development rights do not necessarily apply to some of the buildings on the local list and therefore Article 4 Directions are not required to manage small scale changes appropriately. Such buildings include retail outlets, flats and churches.

5.3 The Council also has the option to pursue the use of Building Preservation Notices under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when demolition or alteration will affect the character of an architecturally and/or historically important building.

## **6.0 Implications for Development Proposals**

### **6.1 Is Planning Permission Required?**

Unlike proposals that will affect statutorily Listed Buildings and in some circumstances within Conservation Areas, specific consent is not required for proposals to Buildings of Local Interest. Rather, where a proposed development is not a permitted activity, including where the permitted development rights have been removed through the use of an Article 4 Direction, and it is to be undertaken on a Building of Local Interest, a normal planning permission must be obtained from Watford Borough Council. In some instances a Building of Local Interest is also located within a Conservation Area, and the proposal will be assessed against the Conservation Area policies in the District Plan and statutory guidance and legislation for Conservation Areas.

### **6.2 Planning Application Assessment Matters**

#### **6.2.1 External Works**

In determining a planning application for works that will affect the exterior of a Building of Local Interest, the Council will have regard to the following matters:

- the proportion of the external elevation to be altered;

- whether the materials used are sympathetic to those used originally;
- whether the colours are sympathetic to those used originally;
- the permanence of the addition (i.e. can it be removed without damaging the external elevation?);
- the proportions of additional or altered doors and windows, relative to existing doors and windows;
- whether the proposal is in keeping with the overall design/appearance of the existing building and surroundings;
- whether the proposal will correct or improve upon an unsympathetic alteration or addition noted in the description of the building in this document;
- whether the proposal will lead to adverse cumulative alterations.

### **6.2.2 Building demolition**

Where an application is required for works to demolish a Building of Local Interest (i.e. the building is located within a Conservation Area, and/or an Article 4 direction has removed permitted rights to demolish, and/or a Building Preservation Notice applies) the Council will have regard to the following matters:

- whether information has been provided on the historic, architectural and archaeological importance of the structure, and the implications of this information. Where there is sufficient architectural or historic interest for doing so, the Council will require the investigation and recording of the construction, design and other features which are present prior to demolition and which are exposed during the demolition. This recording work will be carried out in accordance with a written scheme agreed in advance with the Council and a full report of the results of the work will be submitted;
- whether all reasonable means of preserving the building have been investigated and shown to be unrealistic;
- whether details of a replacement building have been provided. The Council will require a design of a high standard, in keeping with the scale and character of the original building. The Council will favour historic material and / or components from the original building reincorporated in the new building.

### 6.2.3 Setting of buildings

In determining a planning application for works that will affect the setting of a Building of Local Interest, the Council will have regard to the following matters:

- whether the proposed works will obscure the building from the street and/or public views;
- whether the works are in keeping with the age and/or architecture of the building.

## 7.0 Further Information

7.1 For preliminary advice on works to Buildings of Local Interest, contact Watford Borough Council's Development Control Section or Planning Policy Section on *01923 226400* or *01923 278278* before submitting an application.

7.2 The following organisations may be able to provide further information:

Historic England  
24 Brooklands  
Cambridge  
CB2 8BU

- BEAMS  
The Built Environment Advisory and Management Service  
Hertfordshire Building and Preservation Trust  
The Castle  
Hertford  
SG14 1HR  
<http://www.beamsltd.org/index.html>

- The Victorian Society  
1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
London  
W4 1TT  
<https://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/>

- The Twentieth Century Society  
70 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6EJ  
<https://c20society.org.uk/about-us/>

## **8.0 Local Consultation**

A draft version of the proposed changes to the 2010 List is published for public consultation between 19<sup>th</sup> October and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The Council will seek to consult by letter those with an interest in the buildings it is proposed to add to the List. In addition details of the consultation will be sent to all local heritage and community groups, such as residents' associations and local history groups, and efforts will be made to reach a wider audience through local media and the council's website. Responses received helped to shape the final version. Paper copies of this Document will accessible at the Town Hall, the two Public Libraries in Watford and at the Museum. It will also be on the Council's website. Responses received will help to shape the final version of the List.

## **9.0 Adoption**

This final draft of this document will be taken to Cabinet in January 2019 for approval of the proposed changes and adoption of the revised list.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

Support with research and other work is gratefully acknowledged from a number of sources including property owners and staff/volunteers at: Watford Museum, Watford Central Library, Bushey Museum, Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies, RIBA Library, University of Westminster, British Waterways, London Transport Museum, London & North Western Railway Society, North Watford History Society, Watford & District Industrial History Society and BEAMS.