



## City of Westminster

### **PLEASE NOTE**

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies and planning, building control and other legislation and regulations referred to in the text of this guide were current at the time of publication. Because this guidance is an electronic version of the printed guidance as approved and adopted, these references have NOT been changed. For ease of contact; names, telephone numbers and locations have been regarded as non-material editorial changes and have been updated.

As UDP policies and government legislation may have changed over time, before carrying out any work, it is recommended that you consult the current UDP <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/planningandlicensing/udp/index.cfm> for policy revisions and you may wish to check with planning and/or building control officers about your proposals.

## **THE PROTECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN WESTMINSTER**



City of Westminster

# The Protection of Historic Buildings in Westminster

A guide to structural alterations  
for owners, architects and developers

Development Planning Services - March 2000

## **A guide to structural alterations for owners, architects and developers**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The purpose of this guide**

This guide addresses the structural risks involved in altering or restoring brick-and-timber buildings of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Practically all of these buildings in Westminster are 'cellular' in structure i.e. they consist of a number of intersecting load bearing walls which work together in order to transfer the total weight of the building to the foundations.

Approximately 11,000 buildings in Westminster are formally 'listed' as of special architectural or historic interest; the vast majority of the City's historic buildings are not listed but are included in designated conservation areas (*see map, Fig. 14*).

The City Council has a legal obligation to protect listed buildings against all types of inappropriate alterations, i.e. alterations which, in the opinion of the Council, detract from a listed building's special architectural or historic interest. Similarly, the City Council has the obligation to protect all buildings in conservation areas, either listed or not, against alterations which are likely to detract from the special character of their area.

The protection of the structural stability of historic buildings is one of the City Council's prime obligations, and major structural alterations to such buildings will normally not be acceptable. In dealing with applications involving major structural alterations, the City Council applies generally some flexibility in cases of non-listed buildings in conservation areas, whereas on listed buildings anywhere in the City, such alterations will normally be resisted.

Despite the distinction in planning legislation and in Council policy between listed buildings and unlisted properties in conservation areas, these two types of historic buildings in Westminster share the same structural characteristics. Therefore, the advice contained in this guide is aiming to secure the structural stability of both types of historic buildings, either listed or not, and to protect the City's architectural heritage as a whole. Equally, the advice aims to alert contractors, builders, and the general public to the danger of serious injury to people, or other potential disasters, which can be the result of bad planning and bad practice on a building site.

### **1.2 The problem**

In recent years, several historic buildings or important parts of historic buildings in the City of Westminster have collapsed, some had to be dismantled or have been irreparably damaged while undergoing structural alterations. In general, these collapses or unwanted demolitions have been the result of lack of understanding and knowledge about the nature of these structures, and/or incompetence, bad practice and poor on-site co-ordination between contractors, engineers and architects. It is particularly distressing that historic buildings or some of their important architectural features should be destroyed in this careless and shortsighted way, and the City council is not prepared to tolerate such losses.

### **1.3 Towards the solution**

Historic buildings have been the subject of continual change and evolution over the years and few exist now in the form that they were originally conceived. In this sense, it is recognised that, in principle, conservation and building preservation do not rule out change; on the contrary, changes that have taken place in the past, often form important parts of a building's history and they may be contributing significantly to its present architectural character. Equally, appropriate changes, which are absolutely necessary, now in order to secure the continuing beneficial use of a historic building, will be considered as parts of the building's history in the future, provided that they acknowledge its original character and the character of its surroundings. Conservation means the continuation of an old building's useful life, sometimes by restoration, sometimes by careful renewal and sometimes, if it is necessary and appropriate, by careful and sensitive alteration.

The City Council recognises that most developers act in perfectly good faith when proposing structural alterations to historic buildings, but considers that they often fail to anticipate the extent of possible dangers and other problems involved in carrying them out.

This guide is published in order to alert all parties involved in the various stages of building alterations, to potential problems and to give general advice on how to avoid them or how to solve them.

Due to the vast complexity and unpredictability of circumstances that can be encountered on site, this guide cannot cover every possible problem. However, the general points made and underlined in this

guide are very important; they raise awareness and anticipation of possible difficulties and they outline the principles of good practice which can secure the structural protection of historic buildings in most cases.



***The consequence of bad practice and poorly designed support during the course of alterations to a listed building.***

**The City Council believes that any interference with the structural stability of a historic building should be an exemplar of close co-operation between the architect, the specialist structural engineer and the contractor. In specific cases of proposed structural alterations, the City Council's conservation officers should be consulted at an early stage. Their advice can facilitate this co-operation, it can prevent un-necessary remedial work and, above all, it will contribute very considerably to the structural protection and preservation of the building.**

## **2. The Council's Policy**

### **2.1 The Council's approach: New Life for Old Buildings**

The City Council is anxious to promote the preservation and correct maintenance of historic buildings in order to secure their continue beneficial use. Where change is found to be necessary and appropriate, the City Council will ensure that it is carried out in a sensitive way which complements the character of the historic building and its area. **The protection of the structural integrity and stability of a historic building while the building operations are carried out and in the future, is perhaps the most essential of the Council's concerns towards this end.**

The City Council's general policies on conservation and building preservation are contained in Chapter 9 of the Westminster Unitary Development Plan. Appendix 'A' at the end of this booklet gives a summary of policies which relate to the structural protection of historic buildings. For definitive references to policies, please consult directly the Unitary Development Plan.

Advice on practical aspects and details of implementation of policy is contained in many of the Development Planning Services' Supplementary Planning Guidance publications (see list at the end of this booklet).

### **2.2 Information required to assist the Council in deciding applications:**

Applicants for alterations to historic (especially listed) buildings are encouraged to submit, together with their application, the following information. This will enable the City Council to give full and proper consideration to essential aspects of the structural integrity of the building during and after the implementation of the proposals:

- a) Detailed survey drawings of the present layout and appearance (external and internal, if necessary) of the building.
- b) Full structural survey, if appropriate.

c) Relevant evidence of the architectural and structural history of the building and the physical development of its locality. A thorough historical study of the building will enable an applicant to identify, amongst other historical aspects, the following:

the precise age of the building; this may in itself suggest possible structural weaknesses and other relevant characteristics of the structure;  
the original layout and construction, later demolitions, additions and other alterations. More often than not, this information relates directly to the current structural condition of the building;  
any important external elements or facts, such as war bomb damage in the vicinity of the building, underground water courses, and the historical development of the surrounding area.

Original architectural drawings, maps of areas of Westminster and old photographs can be found in the 'Survey of London' and many other historical publications, also in the libraries of relevant professional institutes, the Westminster Archive Centre, and often in central and local libraries.

d) Drawings of the proposals, including detailed indication of:

any proposed demolition or other structural alteration;  
important original features to be retained, with full indication of the method of their protection (e.g. against accidental breakage, dust, etc.) during the building operations;  
full details of temporary means of structural support for both, the overall structure and any retained individual features;  
details of areas designated for storage of heavy building materials or placement of heavy equipment during the building operations, and any additional temporary structural support to secure the stability of the structure in view of these temporary loads.

e) Full written schedule of proposed works.

f) Specifications and details of implementation of proposed works.

### **3. Historic Buildings at Risk**

#### **3.1 Common structural weaknesses in cellular brick-and-timber buildings, and the crucial importance of lateral loads**

The majority of Westminster's 11,000 listed buildings and a large percentage of the City's non-listed properties in conservation areas were originally erected as houses and dates from the 18th and 19th centuries. It is these types of generally domestic and often speculative building which, by their structural characteristics, are highly at risk of serious damage or collapse when their original structure is altered or otherwise disturbed. In general, these buildings are constructed of load bearing brick with timber floors and internal timber-frame stud walls. The chief structural characteristic of these brick-and-timber buildings, which distinguishes them from modern frame structures, is that their stability depends largely on forces of gravity and friction, and for this reason they are much more sensitive to changes in lateral loading.

It is clear that historic buildings are at great risk from any type of structural change. The risks may vary from the loss of a fine decorative plaster ceiling as a result of floor strengthening, to localised structural damage or to total collapse. The degree of risk in a specific case relates directly to one or more of the following factors:

Poor quality of original construction, in terms of workmanship and/or materials;  
Structural deterioration, as a result of age and poor maintenance over the years.  
Structural weakness, as a result of previous un-coordinated alterations or other traumatic events.  
Structural weakening caused by poorly investigated 'remedial' works (such as the demolition of non-original additions to a building).  
Restructuring of any parts (especially the lower parts) of external load bearing walls, spine walls and chimney stacks.  
Structural disruption caused by works of floor strengthening, especially when this includes also vertical strengthening.  
The truncation of terraces or the isolation of previously terraced buildings.

Extensive new groundwork construction on immediately adjacent sites.

The piecemeal approach to any structural interference with a building, including works of conservation, without considering the structure as a whole.

Lack of 'flexibility' in the new scheme and lack of anticipation and adaptability to structural 'surprises' which may come to light in the course of construction.

The introduction of an extensive amount of modern services, without the appropriate structural adaptation of other necessary protection of the old building.

Generally, the excessive structural interference with the old building.

**If the proposed works involve or relate to any of the above factors, the historic building will be put at risk; the proposals must not be decided before the structural stability of the whole building and its parts is carefully and fully investigated.**

It is not unusual for inexperienced contractors to assume that the walls and other structural parts of a building are made to carry only vertical loads, and to ignore the lateral forces which all buildings must be able to withstand. Lateral loading is caused not only by largely rare occurrences such as earthquakes but, more frequently, by common circumstances such as demolition of adjacent buildings, the removal of any lateral restraint, strong wind pressure on a building or on any element attached to it, persistent vibration, excavations on adjacent land, or changes in the consistency of the soil adjacent to the foundations of a building during excessively dry seasons, or even by drastic changes in the vegetation in the area.

**Any structural alteration to a brick-and-timber building, either by itself or in combination with occurrences of this type, can change drastically the forces and balance of lateral loading of the building and, as a direct result, can cause serious structural damage or total collapse.**

The City Council's advice in order to avoid causing structural damage to an old building is set out in more detail further down in this Guide, and is based on the following general principles:

**a) Minimise structural alterations and, if possible, avoid them altogether.**

**b) Where structural alterations are unavoidable, seek advice from an experienced specialist engineer who can propose appropriate measures to compensate the structure for any weakening caused by the alterations.**

**c) Discuss the proposals, at an early stage, with the City Council's conservation officers who can advise on the acceptability of the proposals in principle and can save valuable time and un-necessary work. If the alterations are acceptable in principle, the offices can give useful advice towards securing the stability of an historic building without compromising its architectural and historic value.**

### **3.2 Common causes of collapse of buildings undergoing alterations in Westminster**

(Source: City of Westminster District Surveyors Service)

The following list can by no means be definitive or exhaustive. Disasters on site can happen as a result of many other reasons. Even more importantly, serious structural failure can occur as a result of the combination of a number of such reasons, which only an experienced specialist engineer, familiar with a particular building, should be able to foresee and prevent. However, the following eight points of bad practice are known by the City Council's District Surveyors to have caused the loss of a number of historic buildings in Westminster in recent years.

**a) Removal of lateral restraint to walls** (see example, Fig. 2).

**b) Failure of overstressed piers** (see example, Fig. 3).

**c) Inadequate support of chimney breasts** (see example, Fig. 6)

**d) Filling flues with concrete** (see reference in Fig. 6).

**e) Using existing brick walls as permanent shutters for new reinforced concrete work** (see example, Fig. 7).

**f) Sheeted scaffold acting as a sail and pulling down the wall behind** (Fig. 5).

**g) The effect of inappropriate (and often un-necessary) interference with the foundations** (see

example, Fig. 9).

**h) Overloading the floors.**

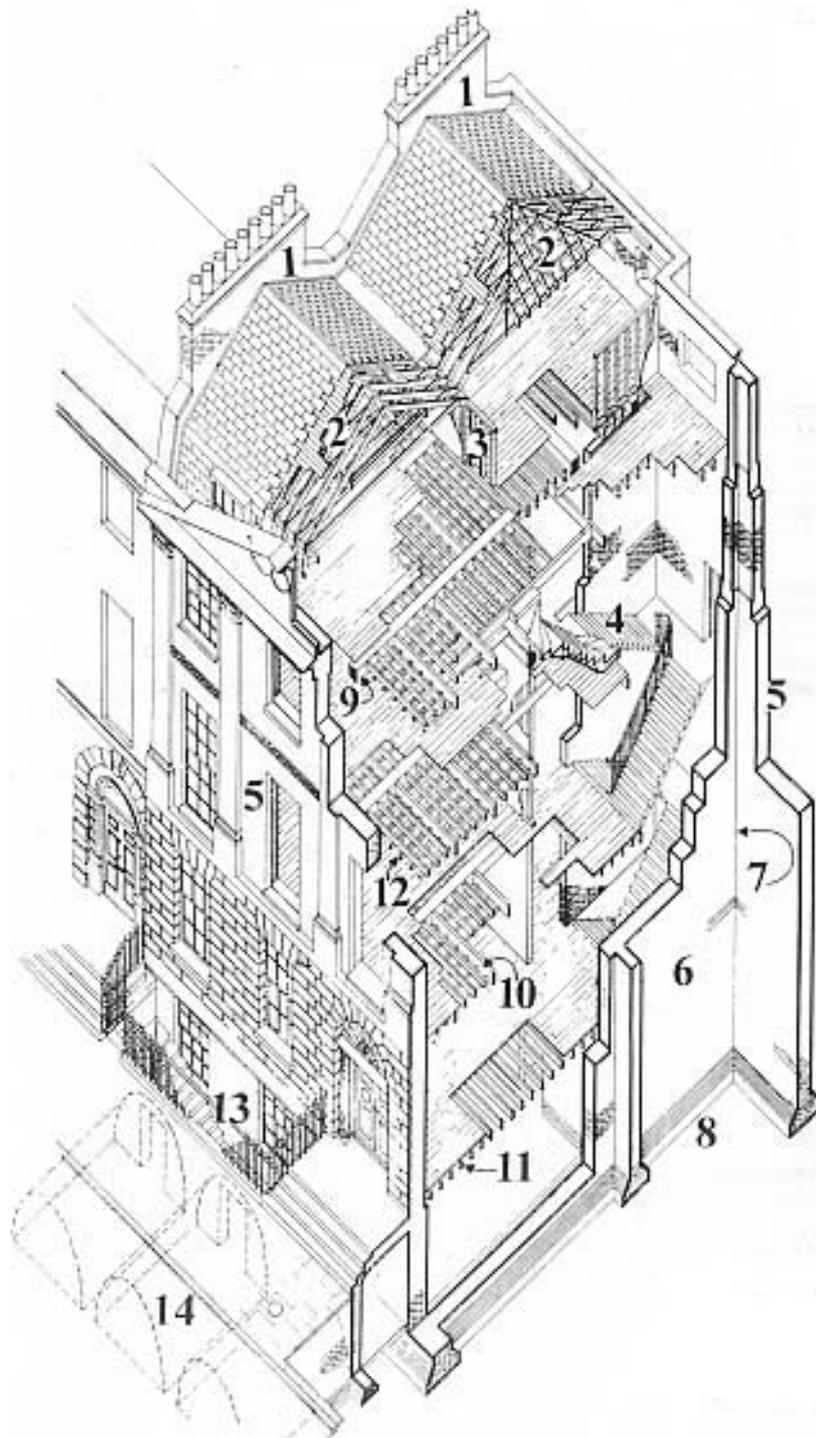


Figure 1 shows the main structural elements of a characteristic type of historic house in Westminster; the annotations on the facing page highlight some typical aspects which can lead to structural failure or collapse in the event of excessive and/or inappropriate alterations.

**Fig. 1: The base structure elements of a characteristic traditional house in the West End (source: Alan Baxter and Associates)**

**Key to Figure 1**

**1. Chimneys and flues** on party walls usually serve two adjacent properties. Chimneys on the main building may also serve rear extensions.

*Note: Most chimneys include many flues, i.e. they are largely 'hollow' and therefore weaker than a solid wall. Also they are exposed to all weather conditions and they are not restrained by any loading from above. As a result, chimneys are often found in a poor structural state.*

**2. Carpentered timber roof** (see also diagrammatic structure and terminology, Figure 8).

**3. Load bearing spine wall** (often timber stud walls on upper floors).

**4. Stairs** are usually carpentered timber but are often made of cantilevered stone steps.

*Note: In the latter case, even small alterations to the supporting wall may cause damage or collapse of the stairs.*

**5. Front and rear elevations.** These are principal load bearing parts of the cellular structure. Usually brickwork, often with their thickness reduced by the width of one brick at the height of some floor levels.

*Note: Brick load bearing walls in a cellular structure have horizontal built-in timber beams at certain heights on the inside. These weaken the inner part of the brick structure which, as a result, tends to 'bulge' outwards. The removal of floors or cross-ties (which counteract this bulging tendency) may allow the wall to bulge or collapse.*

**6. Party wall.** This is a principal load bearing part of a cellular structure. Party walls provide also lateral support to the front and rear elevations of a terrace.

*Note: Inappropriate structural alterations of party walls will invariably damage the front and rear walls and may result in total collapse of major parts of a terrace.*

**7. Wall intersections.** In order to provide complete continuity to a cellular structure, walls should be well bonded at intersections. In practice, bonding is very often found to be haphazard and, occasionally, virtually non-existent.

*Note: The City Council requires that any existing bonding between intersecting walls should not be weakened and, if necessary, should be improved.*

**8. Brick foundations.** These are often corbelled to provide a larger base and a wider distribution of loads onto the ground.

*Note: The City Council requires that no alterations (including works of strengthening) should be made to this part of a cellular building, without the District Surveyor's approval.*

**9. Primary floor beams.** Together with other load bearing elements, these carry the floor structure and provide substantial lateral restraint to the walls.

*Note: Notching and drilling through these beams in order to install new pipes, wiring etc. may reduce their structural strength. More extensive notching (e.g. for extract flues) may practically cause their structural failure.*

**10. Binders** carry and reduce the span of the ceiling joists, and provide substantial lateral restraint to the walls.

*Note: Notching and drilling of binders should be avoided for the same reasons as for 'Primary floor beams' (see 9, above).*

**11. Floor joists** span between primary floor beams and/or load bearing walls; they carry the ceiling joists underneath and the floor boards on top.

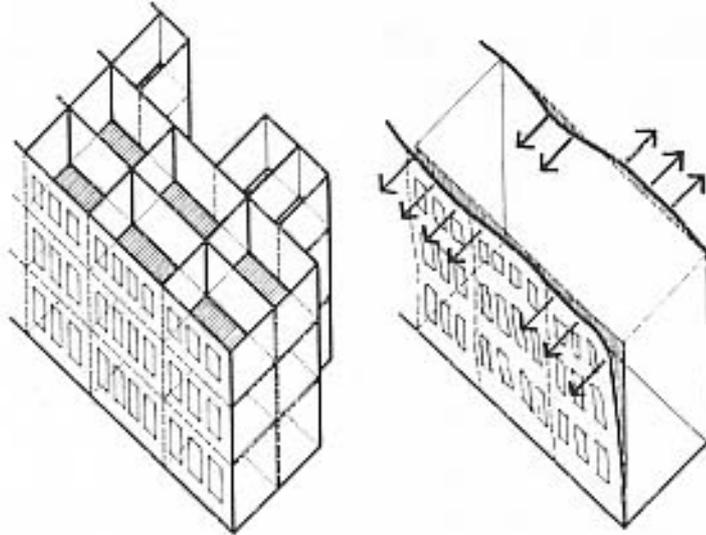
*Note: Notching and drilling of floor joists should be avoided.*

**12. Ceiling joists** carry the ceiling (usually lath and plaster) underneath.

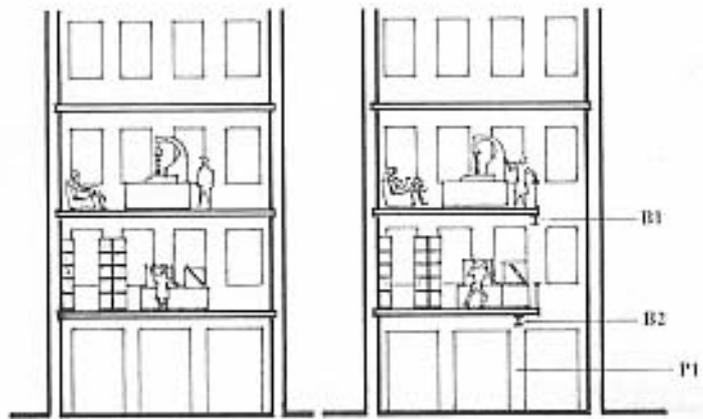
*Note: In smaller traditional houses the ceiling is carried directly by the floor joists.*

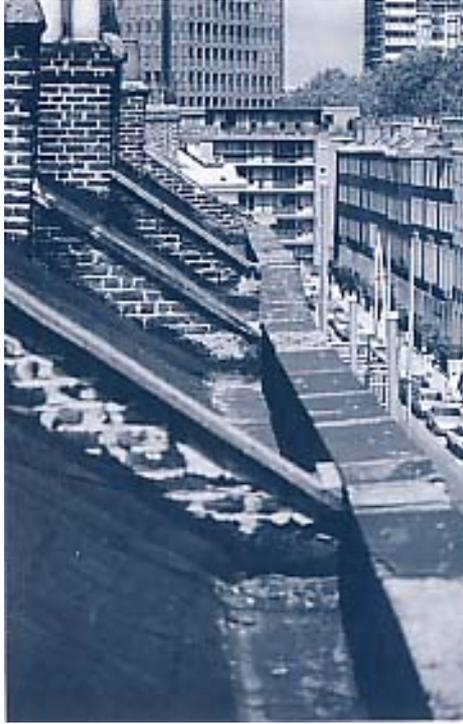
**13. Front light-well area.**

**14. Vaults** under the pavement and sometimes continuing under the street.



**Fig. 2 & 3: Indicative representation of the effect of removal of party walls and floors in a traditional cellular terrace.**





**Fig. 4: An example of 'natural' distortion of the front elevation of a terrace. The party walls and floors normally continue to provide lateral support and prevent serious deterioration and the danger of collapse.**

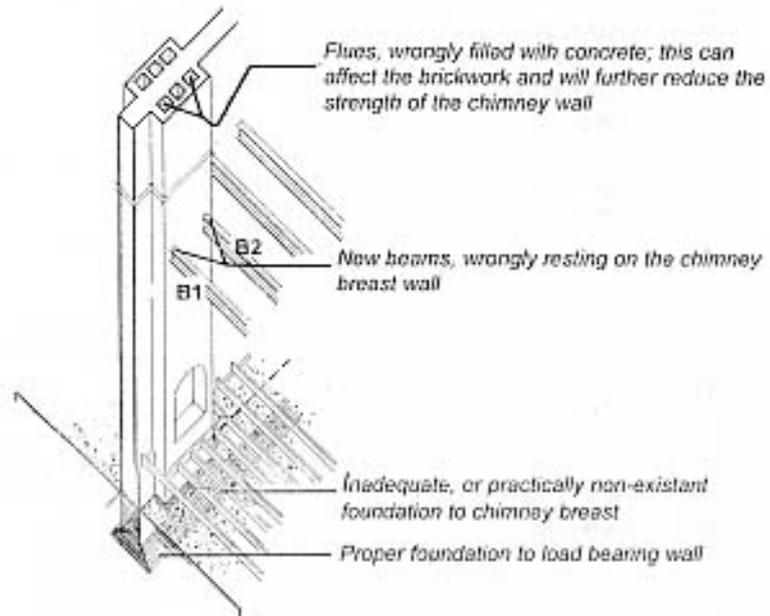


**Fig. 5: Left: Example of scaffold covered with impervious plastic sheets which may, in some cases, act as 'sails' and pull down unsecured parts of a wall.**

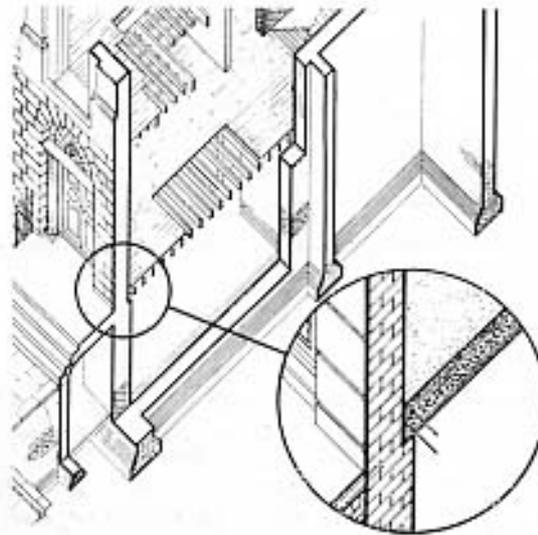
**Right: Net sheeting in situ which allows the wind to pass through.**



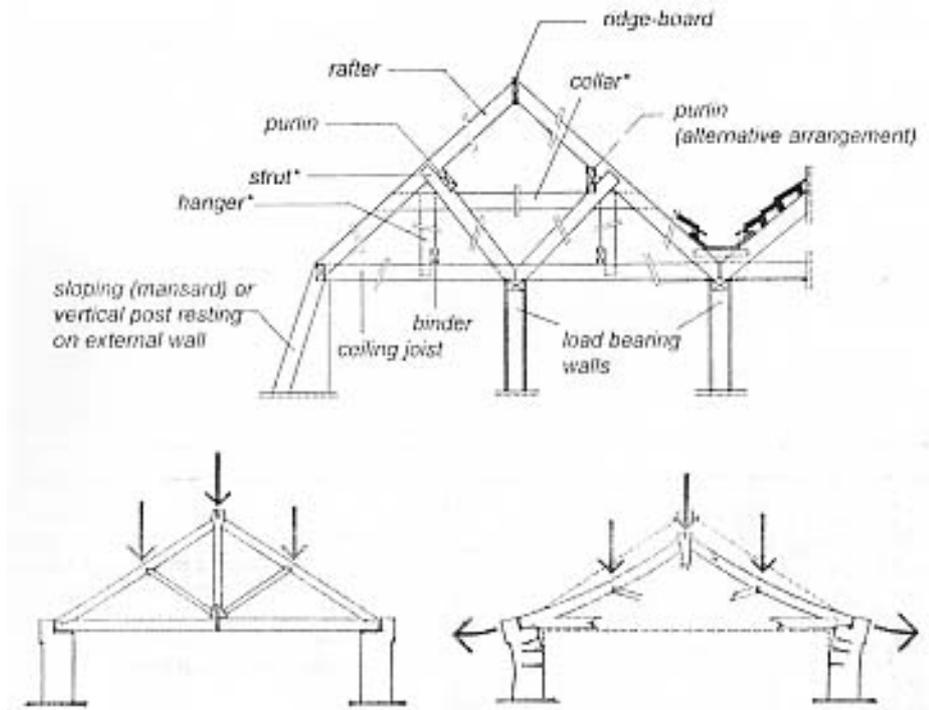
**Fig. 6: An example of a chimneybreast wall, wrongly used to carry additional loads (new beams B1 and B2).**



**Fig. 7: Original timber floor wrongly replaced with reinforced concrete, with old wall used as a permanent shutter. This will affect the old brickwork and may cause its structural failure.**



**Fig. 8: Below: Basic structural components of a typical double roof on a traditional type of building in many parts of Westminster. Bottom: Indicative representation of the effect of in appropriate alterations to the structural parts of a simple roof.**  
 (\*) struts, hangers and collars normally to every fourth pair of rafters.



Roof structures differ according to the structural characteristics and layout of different building types. Every part of the structure plays an important role in the stability of the roof and the whole building. Weakening or removal of a structural component will change the distribution of loads and may force the walls outwards, possibly to the point of collapse. **The City Council requires that no alterations should be made to the structure of a roof, unless they are approved by Westminster's District Surveyor, and they are carried out to approved specifications.**

### 3.3 The risk of 'escalating demolition' in altering cellular brick-and-timber and timber buildings

In deciding the type and extent of structural alterations which can be made to an historic building, all parties involved should be aware of the limits beyond which the building is likely to lose its architectural or historic character and/or may be in danger of structural failure. It is not possible, for example, to create open plan office space in an 18th century terraced house without the trauma of major strengthening works. However, if existing floors, stud walls and cellular layouts are retained, most 18th and 19th century buildings will be able to cope with modern office loadings, with only minor modifications. Other alterations to historic buildings to meet modern requirements such as the insertion of openings of reasonable size between rooms, can usually be carried out with a very low level of intervention. This not only preserves stability but also means that alterations are easily reversible, should the opportunity occur in the future.

In other words, a relatively low level of investment and structural interference can normally adapt an historic building to treat modern requirements. More often than not it is not necessary to make radical interventions to create space for a modern use. If the structural and architectural integrity is maintained, the building should continue to perform well not only in the immediate but also in the more distant future.

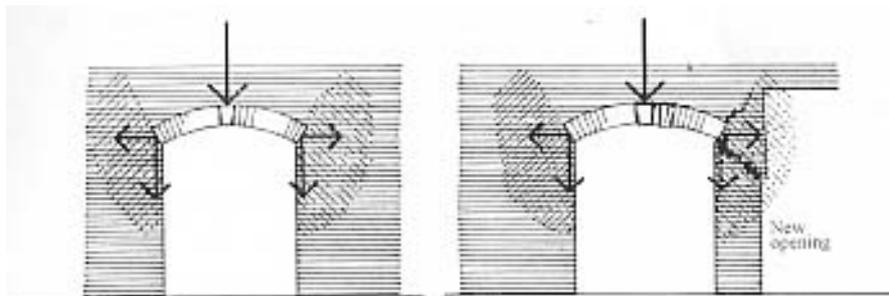
Unfortunately, historic buildings are frequently but wrongly seen as an aggregate of individual 'elements' of importance, such as an interesting facade, a well decorated room, some elaborate plasterwork, an historically characteristic staircase or a piece of well crafted joinery. Proposals are often made on this basis for the retention of parts of an historic building, while others 'less important' parts are proposed to be demolished. Subject to other planning considerations, such proposals are sometimes given consent. However in to many cases of this type, once works are underway, the amount of demolition had escalated to include parts agreed to be retained, simply because these parts were subsequently found to be structurally dependent on those demolished. Figures 2 to 13 illustrate usual reasons of structural failure which, in isolation or in combination with others, can lead to cases of escalating demolition.

**In order to avoid such unwanted escalation of demolition in future cases, the City Council**

considers that it is of utmost importance that the structure of a building is fully investigated before an application is made for its partial demolition. The risk of escalation of demolition increases as the structural alterations become more radical or extensive.



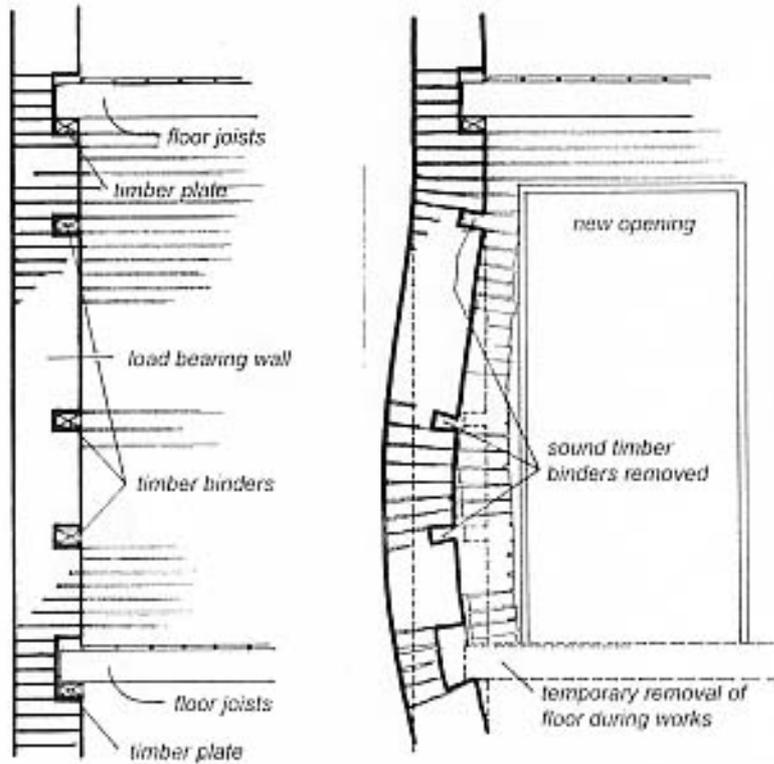
*Fig. 9: Structural failure of pointed arch and wall above, due to differential settlement between its two sides. This can often be the result of inappropriate strengthening of part of the foundations.*



*Fig. 10: Original arch (left) designed to transfer loads onto the load bearing wall on either side. The opening (right) weakens the wall on that side of the arch and, as a result, the remaining pier will crack and may collapse.*

### 3.4 The use of specialists

When formulating proposals involving structural alterations to an historic building, it is of utmost importance to employ specialist architects and engineers who are experienced in dealing with historic buildings, and to consult the City Council at the earliest possible stage.



**Fig. 11:** *The in-built timber plates and binders naturally reduce the strength of the inner side of load bearing wall. Consequently, the wall tends to bulge outwards but well bonded cross walls, any cross-ties and floors normally restrain this. The removal or weakening of one or more of these restraining elements will allow the wall to bulge. In this example, the new door (right) has weakened the restraining effect of the cross wall; in other cases, the removal of the floor, sound timber binders or ties, can have the same effect.*

**Fig. 12:** *Radical alterations to historic buildings (if they are acceptable in other respects) may involve retention of the facade with total demolition of the structure behind. In such cases, the retained facade is vulnerable to collapse, unless it is adequately held up by temporary supports.*

*It is wrong to assume that retaining parts of the existing cross walls (see example, photograph on the right) will provide the necessary adequate support to the facade; these parts of cross walls may themselves be structurally unsound and, if they collapse, they could bring down the main elevation which they are meant to support.*



**Fig. 13: This example illustrates the right method to provide temporary support to a retained facade. This involves an appropriately calculated and constructed temporary structure, in this case consisting of steel members and frames.**



#### **4. Recommendations**

##### **For the prevention of structural failure in cellular brick- and- timber buildings**

With schemes involving high structural risks, many normal site activities can trigger off disastrous results for cellular historic buildings. The lower the risk, therefore, the less likely it is that things will go wrong. On this basis, the City Council offers the following recommendations.

Limit work of structural alteration as much as possible.

'Stripping out' of cellular brick-and-timber buildings reduces their stability. If possible (and if the proposals are acceptable), 'stripping out' should be delayed until other major works have been undertaken and overall stability has been secured. Works of careful opening up for investigative purposes are encouraged. Localised stripping, when associated with implementation of repairs, is likely to be acceptable.

Carry out the necessary permanent structural repairs and renewals as soon as investigation has identified the need for them. Contract programmes should allow for the identification of serious structural defects at the beginning of a project.

However, although monitoring the structural stability of the building constantly during construction is critically important, do not rely exclusively on it; take precautionary measures in advance, following expert advice or experience before failure occurs. Remember that, in monitoring the stability of dilapidated structures, even the best monitoring methods and equipment may prove too slow and inefficient in extreme cases of total structural failure and sudden collapse.

Remember that small changes in lateral loading have a much greater effect on the stability of masonry structures than do equivalent changes in vertical loads.

If major changes are being implemented (e.g. 'stripping out' or taking down non original additions) appropriate measures to prevent structural failure should be put in place as soon as possible and, if necessary and practical, before the works begin.

In projects which consist mainly of new building work with some retention of historic fabric, all building methods, techniques, materials and sequence of works should be adjusted appropriately to safeguard the structural stability of the retained historic fabric.

If necessary, when major structural works take place in one property, take precautions to safeguard the stability of adjoining properties. This recommendation is particularly important in terraces of structurally interdependent buildings.

In the case of complex development projects which affect a number of cellular buildings, maximise co-operation and co-ordination between all different professional and contractual roles involved.

Avoid radical alterations to an historic building. Usually, radical schemes do not provide adequate flexibility to allow for adjustments which may become unpredictably necessary, as implementation progresses.

Ensure that the structural implications of the installation of new mechanical equipment and other services are fully appreciated and taken into account in the design process. Chasing and notching of joists, beams and walls should be avoided.

Given the high complexity and unpredictability of occurrences which can arise on site, the list can by no means be definitive or exhaustive; each recommendation is a generalised statement of good practice for schemes involving structural alterations to historic buildings. The underlying and most important point is that old buildings are structurally different to modern structures and that their structural characteristics need to be thoroughly understood before any alteration takes place. Although there is sometimes scope for the introduction of innovative solutions, the best way of making alterations is, generally, to employ 'original' materials and traditional building methods.

Listed building consent is required for all works of demolition, alteration or extension which affect the architectural or historic interest of a listed building. Conservation area consent may be required for works of demolition or partial demolition which affect the character or appearance of a conservation area.

## **5. Legislation and Guidance**

### **5.1 Planning Legislation**

The general statutory planning provisions concerning all types of development, including alterations, are contained in the 'Town and Country Planning Act 1990'.

The main legislation concerning alterations to historic buildings is contained in the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990'. Further central government advice is given in the Department of National Heritage and the Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 15) 'Planning and the Historic Environment'.

Many of the provisions on which the City Council's policy is based, relate also to a number of other central government statutory instruments and case-law. For detailed advice on planning statutory obligations on proposals for alterations to a specific historic building, please contact the City Council's conservation officers (see 'Contacts') at an early stage.

### **5.2 Other relevant legislation and related provisions**

Proposals for structural alterations to any building will relate to Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Council Policy concerning the following:

The structural stability of the building as well as of adequate or nearby buildings, during the building operations, after completion, and later in the future.

Aspects concerning the health and safety of people who carry out the building works, and also the health and safety of neighbours and the general public during the building operations.

Aspects of health and safety of people who use the building, their neighbours and the general public, after the alterations are completed and later in the future.

For advice on any of these matters, please contact the **District Surveyor's Service**, and/or the **Environmental Health Division** (see telephone numbers and main responsibilities under 'Contacts List' at the end of this Guide).

In respect of the carrying out building operations, general advice issued by the Health and Safety Executive, London South Area, explains the relevant legal duties of designers and clients, as follows:

**Designers should:**

**a) Apply a strategy of avoiding risks, evaluating risks which cannot be avoided and specifying means to combat those risks at source.**

**b) Design to avoid introducing instability. If temporary instability is necessary to achieve the desired alteration, design-in measures to deal with it.**

**c) Consider the consequences of their design on the access available to workers during the building operations (for example, the deliberate removal of a staircase).**

**d) Inform the contractor managing the site of these and any other hazards that are anticipated to occur during the operations.**

**Clients should:**

**a) Ensure that health and safety are fully considered by their planning/design team.**

**b) Make adequate financial provision for health and safety measures on site.**

**c) Allow contractors sufficient time on site to employ such measures fully in their work practice.**

**d) Place the management and risk work in the hands of a contractor who is competent not only in structural alterations but also in matters of health and safety.**

**For details or clarification on these points, please contact the City Council's conservation officers, the District Surveyor or the Health and Safety Executive's office, as appropriate (see 'Contacts').**

## **6. Contacts**

CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO  
WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL  
CONTACTS LIST

### **For Information**

**Health and Safety Executive's Office  
5- 6 Rose Court  
2 Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HF**

**Tel: 08701 545 500**

For additional historical or technical advice you should contact:

**English Heritage  
32 Savile Row  
London W1X 2HE**

**Tel: (020) 7973 3000**

## **7. Other Westminster Planning Publications**

The City Council's Development Planning Services have published a series of guides relating to planning legislation, design policy and implementation, development control procedures, and enforcement. The following list refers to some of these publications which relate to the subject of this booklet:

**Conservation Areas : A Guide to Property Owners**  
**Map of Designated Conservation Areas in Westminster**  
**The Listing of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest**  
**Shopfronts, Blinds and Signs**  
**Mews : A Guide to Alterations**  
**Front Garden Parking : A Guide to Legislation and Design**  
**Roofs : A Guide to Alterations and Extensions on Domestic Buildings**  
**Stucco : A Guide to Care and Maintenance**  
**Conservatories : A Guide to Design and Planning Procedures**  
**Repairs and Alterations to Listed Buildings**  
**Development and Demolition in Conservation Areas**  
**Building Conservation Grants**  
**Architectural Theft (Westminster's Architectural Heritage At Risk)**  
**Plant and Air Conditioning Equipment**  
**A Guide to Planning Enforcement System in Westminster**  
**Archaeology and Planning in Westminster**  
**Trees and Other Planting on Development Sites**  
**Railings in Westminster : A Guide to their Design, Repair and Maintenance**  
**A General Information Leaflet for each of the 51 Conservation Areas**  
**Food and Drink Premises**  
**Plant and Air-Conditioning Equipment**

## **Appendix A**

### **WESTMINSTER'S POLICIES RELATING TO THE STRUCTURAL PROTECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

The policies outlined down below refer to alterations to historic buildings, and more specifically, to aspects which relate to structural security. For definitive references to the policies, please consult the Unitary Development Plan, and the City Council's conservation officers who will help you with further advice on implementation in respect of specific properties (see 'Contacts').

#### **II.1 Strategy:**

To ensure the highest standard of design in alterations and additions to existing buildings. Also, to preserve listed buildings, their setting and features of special architectural or historic interest. Also, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, and to promote the conservation, protection and understanding of Westminster's archaeological heritage.

#### **II.2 Policies:**

Roof extensions and additional floors in any form will not be acceptable where there is serious doubt that the building is structurally capable of carrying an extra storey.

Alterations and extensions should be confined to the rear or the least important sides of the building.

The City Council will seek the retention of buildings which (in the opinion of the Council) make a significant contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Proposals for total demolition of a non-listed building, will be considered on (amongst other criteria) whether the building is in a condition to be kept and is capable of adaptation.

Where it is considered necessary to retain a non-listed building, in part or in whole, structural alterations (including schemes of 'facade-only-retention') will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the proposals can be carried out without an unacceptable degree of risk to the retained part of the building.

Proposals for demolition of listed buildings, in total or in part, including demolition behind the facades, will not normally be acceptable.

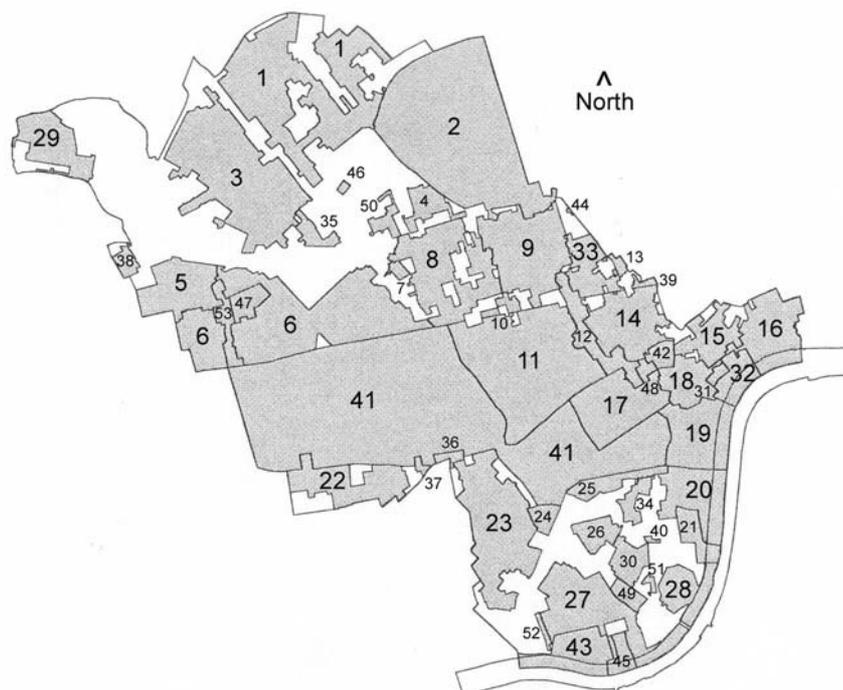
On listed buildings, all proposed works should be shown in an application. Any matter which might be the subject of control under other (i.e. non-planning) legislation (e.g. Building Regulations) should be resolved or be capable of resolution in a satisfactory manner. Where it is necessary to determine the manner in which work should be carried out, sensitive 'opening-up' and limited investigation will be encouraged, provided it is carried out in consultation with the City Council.

On listed buildings, all works (whether repairs or alterations) will be required to be carried out in a correct scholarly manner, under proper supervision and, where necessary.

The City Council will, if necessary, impose conditions on planning permissions or listed building consents, in order to govern any aspect of work to a listed building. Such conditions will be imposed also, if necessary, for the protection of parts of the building that may be outside the area of permitted works. In order to consider an application for planning permission or listed building consent, the City Council will require sufficient information to secure that all works can be carried out without danger to the fabric and structure of the building and adjoining or other affected historic properties. Should, during the course of the approved works, part of a building be found to be insecure or unsafe or otherwise affected, the City Council **may require measures to be taken in order to secure the preservation of the building.**

In order to reduce the risk of theft of architectural features from historic buildings, the City Council may require additional security arrangements in order to safeguard such features while the building is empty or during building works. (Note: The policy may relate also to the preservation of the structure of a building, as the forceful removal of architectural features may, sometimes, jeopardise the structural integrity of parts of the building.)

**Fig 14: Designated conservation areas in Westminster**



**Key to Conservation Areas**

1	St John's Wood	19	Whitehall	37	Knightsbridge Green
2	Regents Park	20	Westminster Abbey & Parliament	38	Aldridge Road Villas & Leamington Road Villas
3	Maida Vale				

4	Dorset Square		Square	39	Hanway Street
5	Westbourne	21	Smith Square	40	Medway Street
6	Bayswater	22	Knightsbridge	41	Royal Parks
7	Molyneux Street	23	Belgravia	42	Leicester Square
8	Portman Estate	24	Grosvenor Gardens	43	Churchill Gardens
9	Harley Street	25	Birdcage Walk	44	Cleveland Street
10	Stratford Place	26	Westminster Cathedral Area	45	Dolphin Square
11	Mayfair	27	Pimlico	46	Fisherton Estate
12	Regent Street	28	Millbank	47	Hallfield Estate
13	Charlotte Street	29	Queen's Park Estate	48	Haymarket
West		30	Vincent Square	49	Lillington Gardens
14	Soho	31	Adelphi	50	Lisson Grove
15	Covent Garden	32	Savoy	51	Regency Street
16	Strand	33	East Marylebone	52	Peabody
17	St James's	34	Broadway & Christchurch	53	Queensway
18	Trafalgar Square	Gardens			
		35	Paddington		
		36	Albert Gate		

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