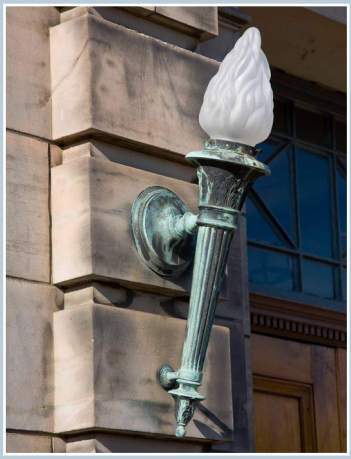
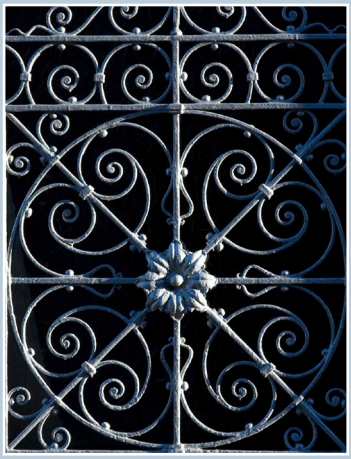
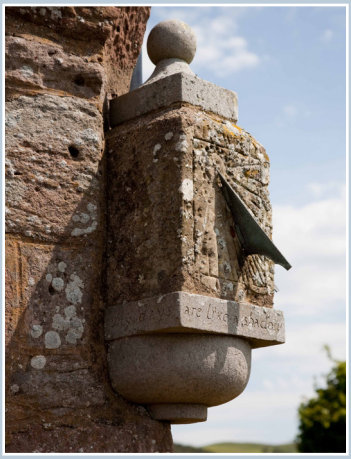
Managing Change in the Historic Environment

HISTORIC SCOTLAND ALBA AOSMHOR

External Fixtures







October 2010

Key Issues

1. **Historic external fixtures form an important element in defining the character of a historic building or group of historic buildings. New external fixtures can have an impact on the character of historic buildings or areas. Listed building consent is required for any works affecting the character of a listed building and planning permission may be required in a conservation area.**

2. **The protection provided by statutory listing extends to all categories of listing, and to all parts of a building, including its external fixtures.**

3. **Before undertaking repairs or alterations it is important to identify the interest of the fixture and seek to maintain its characteristics in the new work. This includes understanding the materials, method of construction, colour, texture and detailing.**

4. **New external fixtures should be sited to maintain the special architectural or historic interest, integrity and fabric of the building.**

5. **The means of new fixing should always be non-ferrous to prevent structural damage or staining.**

6. **Planning authorities give advice on the requirement for listed building consent, planning and other permissions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is one of a series of guidance notes on managing change in the historic environment for use by planning authorities and other interested parties. The series explains how to apply the policies contained in the *Scottish Historic Environment Policy* (2009) (SHEP, PDF 312K) and *The Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) (SPP, PDF 299K).

1.2 This note sets out the principles that apply to altering the external fixtures of historic buildings. It should inform planning policies and the determination of applications relating to the historic environment, and replaces the equivalent guidance in *The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas* (1998).

1.3 Monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require scheduled monument consent for any works. Where a structure is both scheduled and listed, the scheduling controls have precedence. Separate advice is available from Historic Scotland's website: Scheduled Monuments: Guidance for Owners, Occupiers & Land Managers (PDF 718K).

1.4 Separate guidance in this series is available on new micro-renewable technology fixtures.

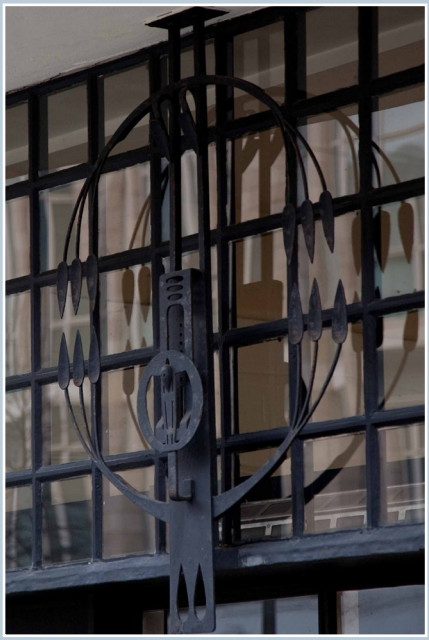
2. WHY ARE EXTERNAL FIXTURES IMPORTANT?

2.1 Historic external fixtures contribute to the architectural and/or historic character of a building and townscape. Decorative ironwork, balconies, lamps, clocks, street signs, rainwater goods, machinery, and other fixtures can be integral to the architecture and reveal information about the age and use of a building and may be examples of technological advances. Beyond their functional value they are often decorative and contribute to the visual attractiveness of a historic building. External fixtures can reveal a hierarchy of spaces within a building, perhaps indicating the location of the main entrance or principal floor or room.

2.2 New fixtures can have a substantial impact on the appearance of a historic building, and the means of attachment can cause damage to historic fabric. The location, size and number of fixtures and the method of fixing require careful consideration to protect the character of a historic building.

3. IDENTIFYING THE INTEREST OF HISTORIC EXTERNAL FIXTURES

3.1 From early times various sorts of fixtures have been applied to buildings, from simple tethering hoops to lamps. From the



Decorative ironwork by Charles Rennie Mackintosh fixed to the exterior of the Willow Tea Rooms in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. © N. Haynes.

A cast-iron balcony marking the principal room on the first floor of a townhouse in Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, part of the development planned by William Henry Playfair in 1825 and built 1826–33. © N .Haynes.

The weather vane at New Lanark mill village was restored in 1980, made by a local craftsman with the names of the villagers stamped on the shaft. © New Lanark Trust.

An elaborate cast-iron bootscraper at the entrance to a house in Randolph Crescent (1829), Edinburgh. Such fixtures were common in the early 19th century when road surfaces were generally muddy. © N. Haynes.

A cheese press built into the wall of a farm cottage at Reay, Highland. Although the press is no longer used, it provides insight into the type of farming of the area and past methods of cheese production.

A later 19th-century cast-iron 'barleysugar' downpipe and decorative bracket in Rothesay, Isle of Bute. © N .Haynes.

18th century the range and complexity of fixtures expanded enormously. Some fixtures were planned from the outset of a building, whilst others were added at a later stage. Fixtures can demonstrate a combination of architectural, associated and historical interest:

3.2 **Architectural interest**: in for example the design or style of fixtures, or the way in which they relate to the architectural form of the building.

3.3 **Associated interest**: a fixture, such as a clock, might be connected with a significant designer, craftsman, patron, or occasionally with historical events.

3.4 **Historical interest:** this derives from the potential of a fixture to provide evidence about the past, illustrating social change, revealing how an object was made, advances in technology, or how a building worked. For example the widespread provision of bootscrapers at the entrances to 18th- and 19th-century houses gives an insight into life before the advent of asphalt roads and cars.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS TO HISTORIC EXTERNAL FIXTURES

4.1 Alterations or repairs to historic external fixtures must protect their character and special interest. Fixtures can be valuable in their own right as major elements in the design of a historic building, broader streetscape or landscape setting. Documentary research and fabric analysis will be useful in understanding the design and material properties of historic external fixtures before undertaking alterations or repairs.

4.2 The potential impact of repetition of alterations to fixtures in unified designs of streets and other groups of buildings should be considered.

Maintenance

4.3 Cast-iron fixtures require regular re-painting to prevent corrosion. Other types of metal may need different maintenance regimes. Where corrosion is severe and the structural integrity of the feature compromised, in rainwater goods for example, a careful record should be made and its replacement made to match in material and design. In some instances there may be a variety of styles employed and proposals to unify non-matching details should be carefully considered as they may relate to a significant historical alteration.

Removal

4.4 Certain historic fixtures may be functionally obsolete but continue to contribute to the architectural interest of a listed building and be of historical value. They should always

be retained. Should a historic fixture require removal and reattachment, non-ferrous fittings should be used and existing fixing points used where possible. Where ferrous fittings are required, an epoxy barrier must be used.

5. PRINCIPLES FOR THE ADDITION OF NEW EXTERNAL FIXTURES

General

5.1 A great number of possible new external fixtures associated with contemporary living can be proposed that may have an impact upon historic buildings, from alarm boxes to security cameras. A number of these may be small in size but their cumulative effect in a historic place can be detrimental. Consideration should be given to the lifespan of a new fixture and whether or not change of ownership could result in replacement or removal.

5.2 The potential for incremental damage by numerous fixtures of a similar nature can be avoided by the shared use of equipment on buildings in multiple occupation or on buildings grouped closely together.

Siting of new fixtures

5.3 New external fixtures must be sited to minimise impact on the architectural integrity and fabric of the building. Secondary elevations, outbuildings and roof valleys or flats that are out of sight from principal views can often accommodate new fixtures without significant impact. Close attention to the routing of any associated cabling or pipework away from principal elevations and features will help to minimise the visual effect of new equipment.

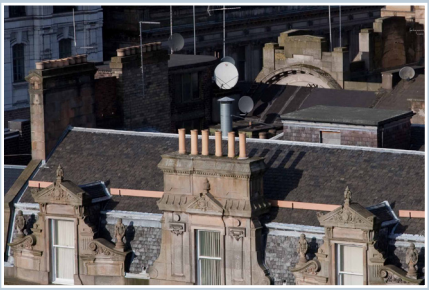
5.4 If a new fixture is necessary and no alternative to a prominent elevation is appropriate then it should be discreetly located without damaging any architectural feature. Painting the fixture to match the colour of stonework can sometimes minimise its impact. The fitting and means of fixing should always be non-ferrous to prevent damage and staining. Fixing into joints is normally the best option.

Telecoms and satellite technology

5.5 Telecommunication devices and satellite dishes can have an adverse impact upon the appearance of a building. These should be positioned so as not to alter a historic profile or skyline, or where impact is minimal.

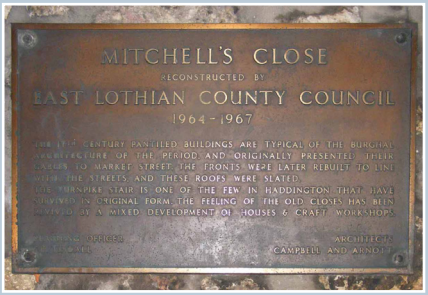
5.6 Antennae associated with mobile phone technology can be situated within some prominent buildings where installation does not require the removal of original fabric or where timber components can be removed and stored for later restoration. A creative approach can result in successful camouflage in some

The cumulative effect of modern fixtures, including satellite dishes, air conditioning units, signage and street lighting, is damaging to the character of this 18th-century building.



These satellite dishes are positioned in a roof valley and are not visible from street level. Fixed to later service features, they do not damage architectural details. © N. Haynes.

The landmark tower of St Stephen's Church (1828), Edinburgh. Telecommunications antennae are positioned on either side of the clock face and on the parapet above behind GRP (glass-reinforced plastic) material that replicates the colour of the surrounding stonework. All the works are easily reversible if the technology changes or becomes redundant. © N. Haynes.



A small, discreet, brass plaque commemorates the reconstruction of Mitchell's Close in Haddington, East Lothian.

Discreet sprung wires are attached to the top surface of this cornice to deter birds. Miller Street, Glasgow.

Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow. The floodlights are positioned behind a cornice and on the roof, therefore making little impact in daylight but providing atmospheric lighting after dark. © N. Haynes.

locations. Planning authorities are able to condition the removal of equipment when it becomes redundant.

Signage

5.7 New signage should be incorporated into the overall architectural composition of a building. It should not obscure or damage any architectural detail. Traditional signage materials and palettes of colour can complement the appearance of the building. Paint should not be applied directly to previously unpainted stonework. Separate guidance on shopfronts and shop signage is available in this series.

Flagpoles

5.8 Flagpoles should relate to the building's character, scale, proportions and architectural detailing.

Banners

5.9 Banners may sometimes be fixed to historic buildings if the means of attachment does not damage any architectural details. However, they should only be allowed on a temporary basis, and not where they would have an adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the building.

Bird control

5.10 Bird control devices require careful consideration to minimise the impact upon historic character. Wire mesh and spikes can be visually detrimental whereas sprung wires are generally less obtrusive. A balance should be sought between conserving the visual characteristics and protecting the building and its users from bird nuisance: less intrusive bird control devices should be considered first.

Lighting

5.11 Street and floodlighting must be considered carefully to minimise detrimental impact on the character of the building.

5.12 Street lighting fixed to a principal elevation should only be considered where independent lighting poles are not appropriate. The lamp and the associated cabling should be carefully integrated within the architectural composition.

5.13 The innovative and imaginative use of lighting can be an important component in enhancing the distinctiveness and character of a building or conservation area. Fixtures should always be located unobtrusively, on a basement wall for example.

5.14 New lamps to light an entrance should be sympathetic to the design and materials of the building.

Alarm boxes and utility meters

5.15 Alarm boxes and utility meters should be fixed in discreet positions without damaging architectural composition or details.

Lesser elevations, basement walls or beneath a platt may be appropriate solutions.

Security cameras

5.16 Security cameras require prominent positions to achieve maximum surveillance but should not be permitted in positions that damage the architectural character or appearance of a historic building. Careful consideration should be given to the size of the camera. Positioning of security cameras and cabling should be discrete.

Here the corner profile of the building is broken by the brackets for a security camera, an old lamp, and modern street lamp. High Street, Edinburgh.

Eye bolts and brackets

5.17 Eye bolts for window cleaning access or the attachment of seasonal street decorations should only be permitted where they will be situated discreetly and without damaging architectural details. The material and means of fixing should be non-ferrous, preferably coloured to match adjacent stonework.

5.18 Temporary scaffolding should not be anchored into stonework as the fixings will leave permanent damage. Scaffolding should be fixed around architectural features, ensuring no damage occurs during construction or dismantling. Protective materials fixed between steel scaffolding ends and stonework will help prevent accidental damage.

5.19 The location and number of hanging baskets and their associated fixings should be carefully considered, and where possible incorporated within the composition of an elevation. The baskets and fixings should not damage or obscure any architectural detailing.

6. CONSENTS

6.1 Listed building consent is required for any work to a listed building that affects its character. The local authority determines the need for consent.

6.2 Where listed building consent is required, an application is made to the local authority. This should include accurate scale drawings showing both the existing situation and the proposed works in context. It is normally helpful to provide detailed technical information and photographs. A brief description of the interest of the external fixture and an explanation of the impact of the alterations are always useful in assessing change.

Discreet stainless steel eye-bolts are re-used each year for the Christmas decorations in Bo'ness. © N. Haynes.

Other selected Historic Scotland publications and links

Maintaining your Home – A Short Guide for Homeowners (2007) (PDF 1.4MB)

Inform Guide: Finials & Terminals (2008)

Inform Guide: The Maintenance of Cast-iron Rainwater Goods (2007)

Inform Guide: Maintenance of Iron Gates and Railings (2007)

Inform Guide: Boundary Ironwork - A Guide to Reinstatement (2005)

Inform Guide: Bird Control on Buildings (2008)

Inform Guide: Bronze - The Care & Maintenance of Monumental Bronze (2005)

For the full range of Inform Guides, Practitioner Guides, Technical Advice Notes and Research Reports please see the Publications section of the Historic Scotland website.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Details of all individual scheduled monuments, listed buildings, designated gardens and designed landscapes, and designated wrecks can be obtained from Historic Scotland (see contact details below) or at: www.pastmap.org.uk. Details of listed buildings can also be obtained from the relevant local authority for the area.

Advice on the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent, building warrants, and other permissions/consents should be sought from local authorities.

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Bronze torchère lamp (1929), Younger Hall, St Andrews, Fife.

Later 19th-century cast-iron window grille, Vicar Street, Falkirk.

Eighteenth-century sundial, Linton Kirk, Scottish Borders.