

# Conservation and Retrofit



Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency

Historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN 18)

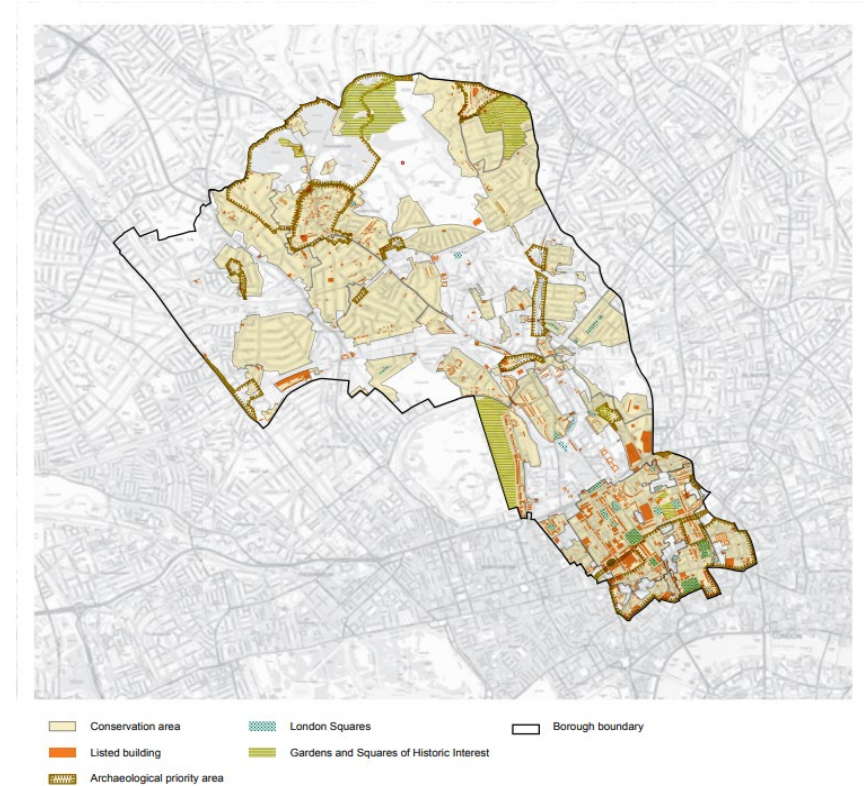


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# Introduction

- The Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019
- Power and heating for buildings causes 85% of the direct carbon dioxide emissions
- 40 conservation areas covering much of the borough
  - Statutory requirement to have *special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* (Section 72, Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)
- Over 5,600 listed buildings and structures
  - Statutory requirement to have *'special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'* (Section 16, Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024
  - 'Great weight' given to the conservation of heritage assets
  - *'Significant weight' to support energy efficiency...but also apply heritage policies*
- Aim to encourage energy efficiency whilst balancing the boroughs heritage

Map 4: Heritage and Archaeological Sites



## Conservation

*Conservation is the process of **managing change in ways that will best sustain the heritage significance of a place in its setting**, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce this significance for present and future generations.*

## Retrofit

*“the upgrading of a building to enable it to respond to the imperative of climate change”. Retrofit may involve repair, renovation, refurbishment and/or restoration of the building. The aim is to both **reduce** carbon emissions to **mitigate** against further climate change and ensure the building is well **adapted for our warming climate**.*

# When is Planning Permission required?

- Planning permission is only required for 'Development'.
- Lots of retrofitting work does not need permission unless your building is listed such as:
  - Roof insulation
  - Secondary glazing
  - Floor insulation
  - Internal Wall insulation
  - Windows replacements that are like for like replacements (size, material, colour, design) but with double rather than single glazing
    - NB: These works to a listed building would still require listed building consent.

Planning is required for the follow:

- AHSP
- External wall insulation
- External shading



# How does Camden approach retrofitting historic buildings?

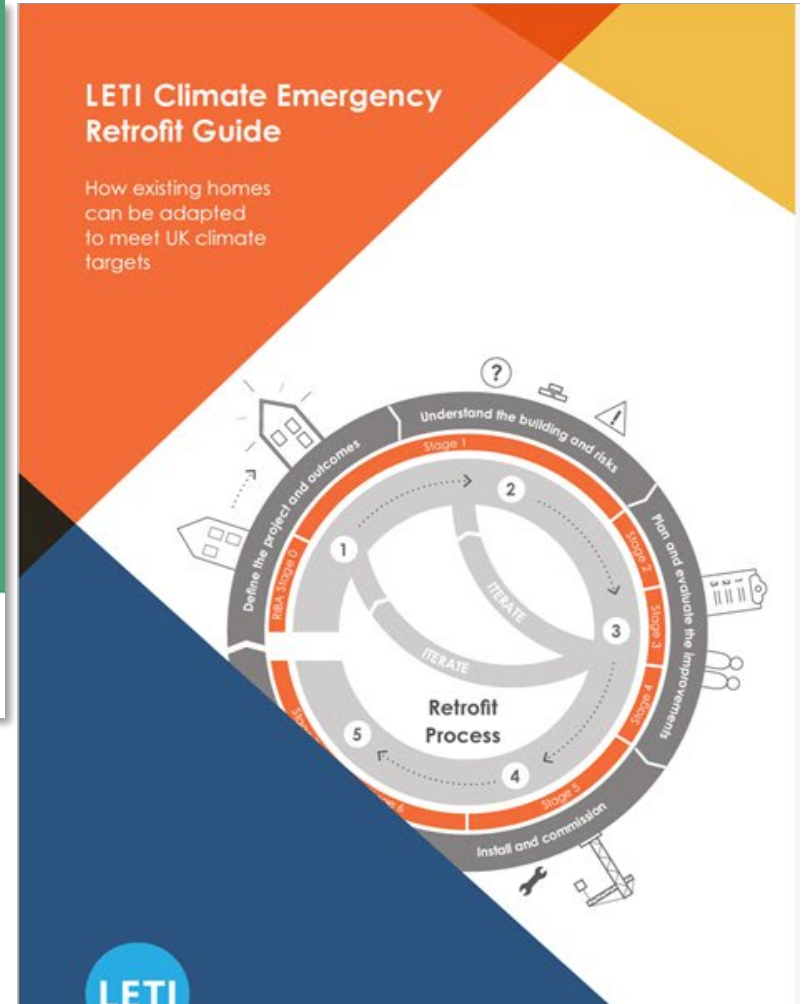
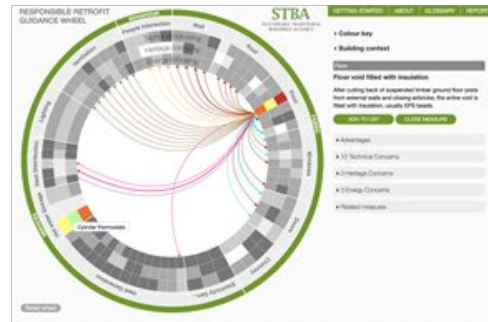
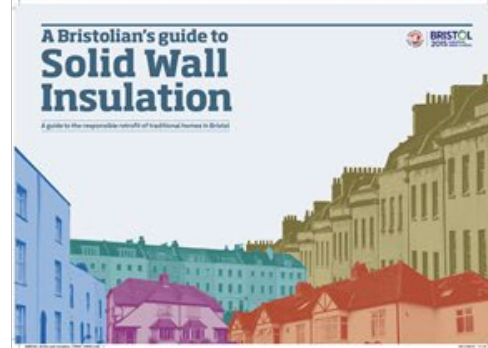
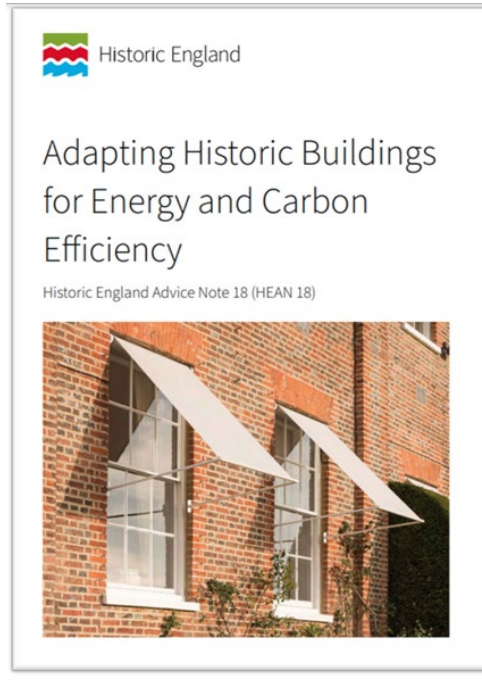
- Recognises that there is a balance.
- Look to preserve what is significant while also allowing buildings to adapt to the future and in line with the climate emergency.
- Retrofitting is a public benefit but does not always outweigh the harm to heritage.
- Case Studies:
  - Bloomsbury Townhouse- Grade II Listed and a deep retrofit.
  - Swiss Cottage Library- Grade II double glazing, Air Source Heat Pumps, new roof.
  - Alexandra Road Estate - Grade II\* new windows, and new heating.
  - Coal Office- Conservation Area PV Panels.



Figs. 2-3 Front & rear elevations post-retrofit (© Alan Parker)

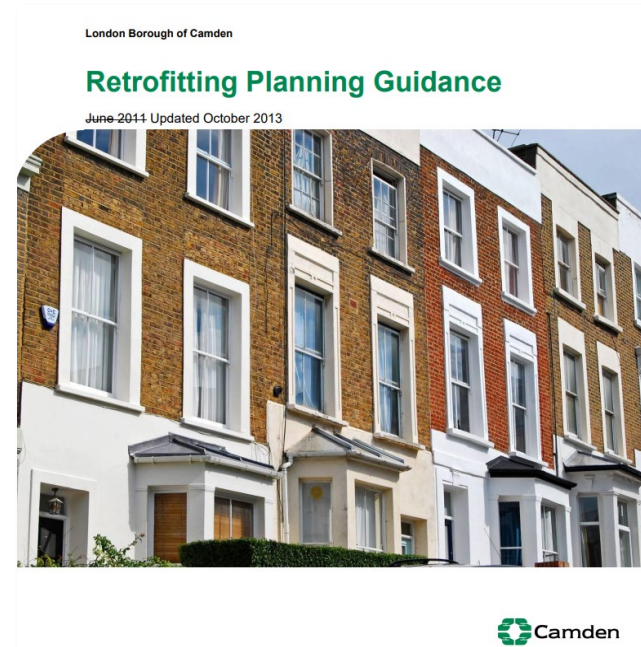


# Best Practice Guidance



# Camden Guidance

- Existing Energy Efficiency planning guidance for conservation areas and Retrofitting Planning Guidance.
- CPG Home Improvements 2021
- ‘Find out if I need planning permission?’ – online portal.
- Best practice guidance is evolving at pace e.g. Historic England's Guidance. An oversaturation of guidance can create confusion rather than clarity



# What are other Boroughs doing?

- Westminster – **Retrofit Taskforce** (Innovate UK Funded) and ‘**How To**’ guides
- **Heritage Partnership Agreements** Westminster with the Howard de Walden Estate on Retrofitting
- **Locally Listed Building Consent Orders:** Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea-adopted. Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster in progress but unclear on uptake
- **Local Development Order:** Queens Park Estate, Westminster to facilitate retrofit at scale
- **Typology Based Guides:** Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



**WRT**  
Westminster  
Retrofit  
Taskforce



# Emerging Work: New Local Plan



- Policy CC1 and CC5 - Sustainability improvements to existing buildings (retrofitting)
- Policy D5 – sustainability improvements to designated Heritage assets – support proposals to adapt and improve the energy performance
- Take into consideration the nature and scale of the proposed measures and the public benefits gained and weigh these against the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, giving significant weight to measures that respond to the climate emergency in a sensitive manner.

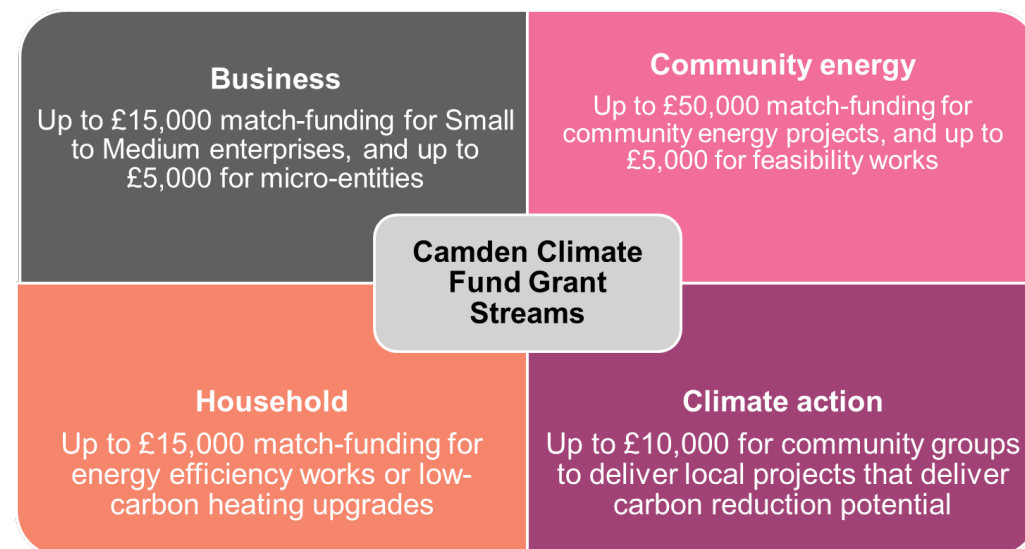
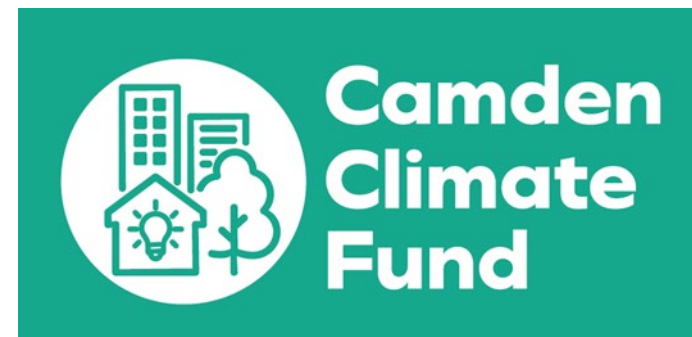
# Emerging Work: Article 4 Direction Revisions

- We are in the process of creating new Article 4 Directions for Hampstead, South Hampstead and Belsize Conservation Areas.
- These will be in place by June 2026.
- The Article 4 Directions have removed the need for owners to apply for planning permission to install solar panels, solar thermal and standalone solar. This is already the case in all other conservation areas.



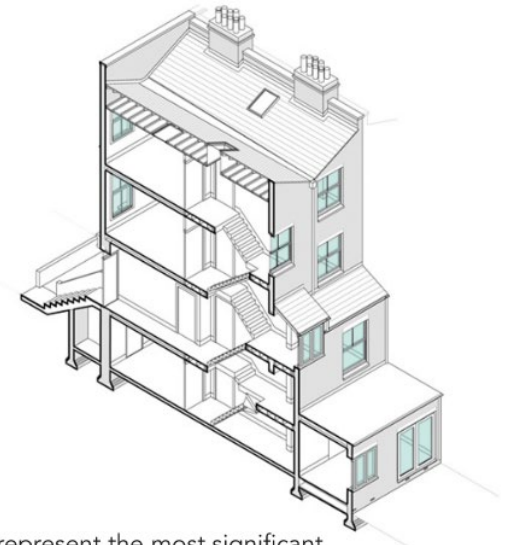
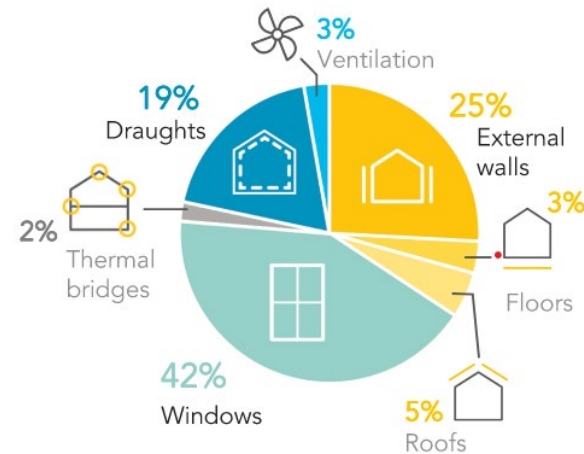
# Emerging Work: Camden Climate Fund and Free Pre app service

- Camden Climate Fund (CCF) re-launched in 2025
- The Camden Climate Fund provides funding of up to 50% of the cost to reduce the carbon used in our homes, businesses and community spaces.
- The fund is financed by Camden's carbon offset payments, which are collected from developers when they fall short of the Mayor of London's Carbon Reduction target for Major developments of Net Zero carbon
- Funding is also available for those on lower incomes from ECO funding or the Warm Home Grant
- To encourage take up planning are offering free pre app to those applying to the CCF - particularly useful for those in heritage properties.



# Emerging Work: London Councils Heritage Retrofit

- Retrofit workstream is developing a 'London Heritage Retrofit Guide'
- Promote a consistent retrofit approach across London
- Including case studies of existing buildings
- Provide guidance on
  - Replacement windows
  - External Wall Insulation
  - Air Source Heat Pumps
  - Solar Panels



Proportion of heat loss in a Victorian home. Windows represent the most significant opportunity to reduce heat losses. Source: ESSA Resident's Retrofit Guide

# Summary:

- Working to encourage energy efficiency whilst protecting heritage
- New **Historic England guidance** and work underway on **London Council's Retrofit Guide**
- Updating **Article 4** directions
- Funding through **Camden Climate Fund** with **free pre app** advice
- Huge amount of guidance out there but duplication does not add value
- Retrofitting with heritage buildings is encouraged and promoted
  - Work does not always need permission

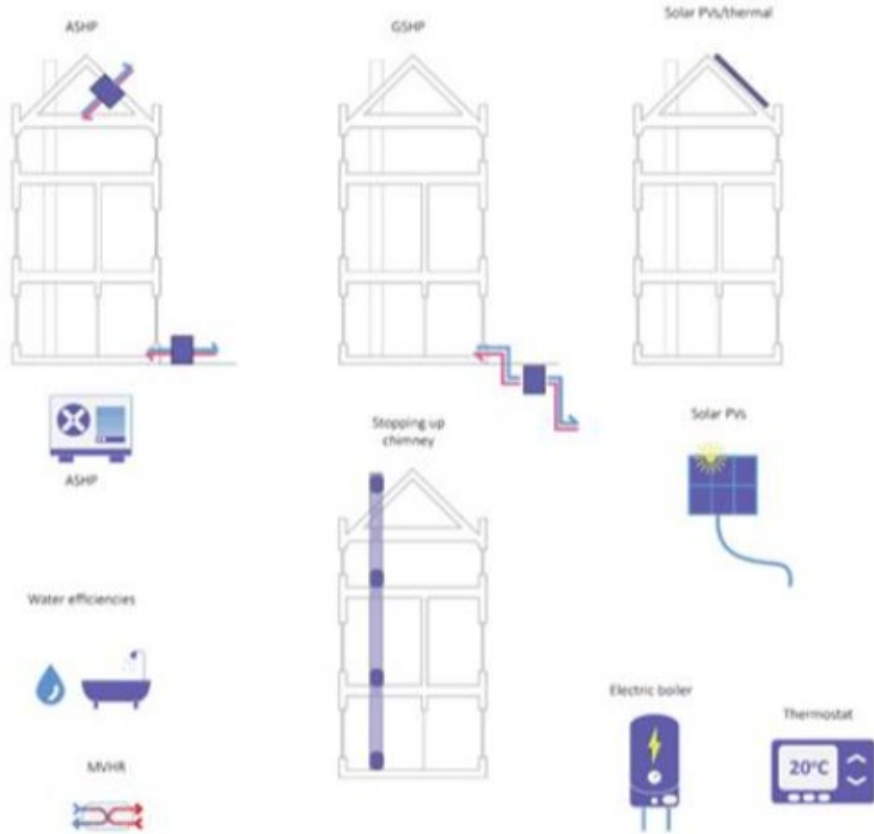


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# Retrofit options – energy



# Retrofit options - insulation

