



INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION

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Consultation on Draft Planning Reform (NI)
Order Policy and Legislation
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Dear Ms Kennedy

The Planning Reform (Northern Ireland) Order Consultation

I refer to the above consultation document.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the professional body for building conservation practitioners and historic environment experts working in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales with connections to the Republic of Ireland. The Institute exists to establish, develop and maintain the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all. IHBC Members come from a range of professional disciplines in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including conservation officers, planners, architects, regeneration practitioners and academics.

Article 8: a statement of 'the principles of design' is an obvious necessary additional item of information, related to a planning application and IHBC supports its introduction;

Article 10: limiting the period of the validity of consents will remove uncertainty where an approval has not been implemented and is a positive proposal;

Article 12: the proposal to temporarily designate conservation areas, putting-in-place controls over demolition in advance of consulting the public, is greatly welcomed and considered very necessary, as it will prevent the loss of heritage buildings, when there is advance knowledge of a conservation area being declared. The Institute is also supportive of wider consultation;

Article 13: more flexible 'stop notice' powers are considered desirable. These are not widely used by Planning Service, at present. Hopefully, this proposal will remove the likelihood of compensation being claimed and thereby encourage the Planning Service to use 'stop notices' more frequently?

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Article 14: increased fines for erecting unauthorised advertisements is to be welcomed, as they are very difficult to control and are a real enforcement problem for the Planning Service. It is even desirable for the manufacturer/erector of such signs to become jointly responsible for the contravention as—the Institute is convinced—such people frequently erect signs in the full knowledge that the advert is contravening advert regulations;

Article 15: the Institute is concerned with the potential implications of the proposal for the delegation of decision-making to a single commissioner. It considers that the involvement of a number of commissioners in determining an appeal more satisfactory and results in more consistent decision-making. With respect to appeals effecting the historic built environment, the Institute considers it imperative that a commissioner is appointed with a specific conservation qualification and experience, ideally with full membership of the IHBC and

Article 23: greater control over trees, particularly over those owned by the Crown that may be within or adjoining conservation areas is desirable.

I trust these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully

Karen Holyoake
Consultations Secretary