

Level 0 Listed Building Consent Pre-application Advice

Providing householders in listed buildings with early-stage advice from a Conservation Officer trained in retrofit for traditional buildings

How it works

Pre-application advice is a common service provided by local planning authorities. It gives householders an opportunity for feedback on their proposals before a formal submission, and guidance on what to include in a full listed building consent or planning application. Level 0 advice is an innovation at the 'scoping' stage, where households are not seeking advice on a specific measure, but instead want to explore their options before deciding which to pursue. Unlike a 'standard' pre-application, householders do not need to prepare any forms or designs first.

Level 0 advice is intended as an affordable service including a site visit from a Conservation Officer with retrofit training. Afterwards, the Conservation Officer provides an informative Level 0 report, advising on suitable options for retrofit and any supporting maintenance work needed.

Alternatively, this can be delivered as a joint service where a Conservation Officer and Retrofit or Energy Assessor visit a home together, and the Level 0 report is complemented by a more detailed Home Energy Efficiency Plan.



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What you'll need

- A supportive local council that recognises the need for sympathetic retrofit
- Local planning authority involvement and leadership to provide the service
- Conservation Officer capacity to provide a Level 0 service (which can apply a fee to support this)
- Traditional building retrofit expertise within Conservation Officers providing the Level 0 service (including knowledge specific to listed buildings)

Case study

Level 0 advice is a new concept pioneered by **Green Heritage Homes LEAD**, led by Bath and West Community Energy (BCWE) and Bath & North East Somerset Council (BathNES). The Conservation Officer role was central to this method. Householders prepared to share their experience as Listed Building Champions were given the option of a combined site visit and Home Energy Efficiency Plan from BWCE's Energy Assessor. Green Heritage Homes LEAD worked specifically with listed buildings, but similar principles could be applied to unlisted homes in Conservation Areas.

Why it works

Pre-application advice improves the quality of planning applications, making them more likely to be approved. When people understand the heritage significance of their home, they understand what features should be protected. When they understand which retrofit measures work best in older buildings, better outcomes are achieved for energy efficiency while avoiding harm to the building or its historic significance. Households living in listed buildings often abandon attempts to pursue retrofit because of a lack of affordable specialist advice or application complexity ([UK Government, 2024](#)). Level 0 advice helps overcome these barriers by explaining viable options and how these fit within local planning policy. By starting with, 'You *can* do this,' rather than, 'You *can't* do that,' Level 0 advice can raise ambition and prompt actions that may not previously have been considered.

Top tips

- ✓ Level 0 advice is best delivered by Conservation Officers with retrofit knowledge, and can be implemented within existing resources (which may include a standard pre-application advice fee)
- ✓ Joint site visits with a Retrofit Assessor provide in-depth retrofit advice consistent with Conservation Officer advice, reducing uncertainty that can put householders off proceeding (though this approach requires more resource and potentially funding)
- ✓ Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings is a highly recommended qualification to support both Level 0 advice and retrofit assessment in traditional buildings
- ✓ If Level 0 advice recipients consent to further contact, they can potentially be supported by the council or community energy partners through the remainder of the retrofit process

Resources

- Green Heritage Homes resources hosted by [BWCE](#) and [BathNES](#)
- Energy Efficient Listed Buildings webinar training (15 May 2024) by BWCE and BathNES: [Part 1](#) (length: 48:32) and [Part 2](#) (length: 47:39) available on BWCE's YouTube channel
- [Listed buildings retrofit](#): a series of short videos on suitable solutions, available on BWCE's YouTube channel
- Other relevant LEAD Toolkit contents (see [South West Net Zero Hub](#)): **Green Heritage Homes LEAD** (project summary), **Green Open Homes West LEAD** (project summary)
- SWNZH LEAD Webinar Series: [Innovations in domestic retrofit advice - Retrofit, Planning and Historic Housing 22 Oct 2024](#) (see also [full slides](#))
- [ABBE](#) or [NOCN](#) Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings
- Relevant examples of supportive local guidance from [BathNES](#), [Islington](#), [Lewisham](#), [Cambridge](#), [Westminster](#) and [Oxford](#)



About LEAD

LEAD is managed by South West Net Zero Hub and funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The programme is trialling innovative approaches to retrofit advice for hard-to-reach groups and hard-to-treat homes. Find out more [here](#).

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