

4.8

Conversions of Chapels, Churches & Schools

The conversion of chapels, schools and churches is less common in the Vale than barn conversions. Similar to barn conversions, the design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings often relate to the creation of room and floor divisions in buildings which originally comprised large internal spaces.

Structural Integrity

Although structural integrity is less likely to present a problem compared to barn conversions, the issue still needs to be addressed. Where there are any uncertainties about the structural integrity of the building or where additional loads are being placed on the building's structure, a structural report will be required.

Architectural & Historic Characteristics

The defining characteristics of chapels, schools and churches are often similar, comprising formal proportions and a simple rectangular footprint, tall sash windows, brick or stone arches, uninterrupted roof slopes, long ridge lines, and large internal spaces, sometimes with mezzanine floors. Architectural detailing may include stained glass windows, ornate timberwork and plasterwork on walls and ceilings, and ecclesiastical memorials. These features are essential to the building's character and, therefore, need to be retained as part of the proposed conversion.

Chapels, schools and churches are typically located in central village locations. The buildings rarely include much external space, which can present a challenge for residential conversion in terms of providing amenity space and minimising any overlooking of neighbouring dwellings.



534 Successful retention of feature windows



535 Successful retention of original porch



536 Successful retention of original porch

4.8

Conversions of Chapels, Churches & Schools

Design Approach

The primary objective of all conversions is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. This may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as satellite dishes, aerials, and dormer windows tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided. If additional light is required, it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights (i.e. conservation rooflights which are designed to be flush with the roof plane).

The internal wall divisions should be retained and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum.

Existing window openings and window detailing, such as stained glass, should be retained and refurbished. Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows in such a way as to be visible from outside the building.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character.

Any existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible, and the inclusion of additional detailing which would detract from the character of the building should be avoided.

Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible.



537 Internal floor division is visible through window



538 Unsuccessful removal of original entrance



539 Small rooflight allows light to upper floor

4.9 Conversions of Commercial Buildings



540 Woolstone

4.9 Conversions of Commercial Buildings

A variety of commercial buildings have played a significant role in the history of the Vale, including mills, shops, pubs and breweries. The design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings can vary significantly and can be particularly difficult for buildings such as mills and breweries which have large internal spaces and tall ceiling heights.

Architectural & Historic Characteristics

Whilst pubs and shops usually have a domestic scale and design, industrial buildings such as mills and breweries are usually much larger, with a more formal architectural composition. The defining characteristics of these industrial buildings include formal proportions usually in a rectangular plan, and large windows (i.e. plate glass in iron frames with top-hinged openings, small pane timber sash windows or Crittall Windows).

Roof forms tend to be relatively simple, but where buildings have large floor plans, the space may have been spanned by a multi-ridged roof with a central light atrium. Architectural detailing may include arched brick window and door openings, ornate brickwork and iron fittings on external elevations, and internal iron rafters and structural braces. These features are part of the history and character of the building and, therefore, should be retained as part of the conversion.



541 Retained industrial feature



542 Retained ornate brickwork



543 Retained industrial feature

4.9 Conversions of Commercial Buildings

Design Approach

The primary objective of all conversions is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Consequently, conversion schemes need to be carefully designed.

The introduction of uncharacteristic features such as satellite dishes, aerials, and dormer windows should be avoided. If additional light is required it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights.

The internal walls should be retained and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and detailing should be retained. Where additional floors or mezzanines are introduced, they should not be visible through windows.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings such as storage sheds should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings.

Existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible. Original features such as internal metalwork can make a positive contribution to the final scheme. The introduction of additional detailing, which would detract from the character of the building should be avoided.

Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible. Walls and fences should be avoided where they would harm the building's character or setting.

Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.



544 Industrial character retained in conversion



545 Atrium used to allow light to upper floors



546 Original features retained, existing openings retained



547 Simple landscaping softens industrial buildings

4.10 Refurbishment



4.10 Refurbishment

The Vale is fortunate to have a rich architectural heritage, with over 2,000 listed buildings (ranging from large country houses to modest cottages), 8 Historic Parks and Gardens and 53 Conservation Areas. Collectively, these contribute to the distinctiveness of the District and represent a valuable architectural, historical and economic resource.

The architectural heritage of the Vale should be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. This does not mean, however, that all buildings need to be preserved unchanged. Instead, their sympathetic refurbishment, alteration and adaptation will be encouraged to prevent possible disuse and decay.

Where a building is listed, consent will be required for any external or internal alterations which affect its character. Whilst all proposals are considered on their merits, certain works to listed buildings are unlikely to be acceptable in principle. Examples include installing UPVC windows, re-pointing walls in cement-rich mortars, removing original features such as fireplaces and staircases, painting exteriors in inappropriate colours, installing satellite dishes or other domestic paraphernalia on prominent elevations, and adding poorly designed extensions.

This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when refurbishing buildings.

Structural Integrity

As with conversions, building restorations and renovations can encounter structural problems. Where there is any uncertainty about the impact proposed works would have on the structural integrity of a building, a structural report will need to be prepared.

Design Approach

The primary objective of all refurbishments is to retain the character and appearance of the original building. Consequently, conversion schemes need to be carefully designed. The



549 Refurbishment of thatched dwelling



550 Refurbishment of dwelling



551 Windows should be refurbished where possible

4.10 Refurbishment

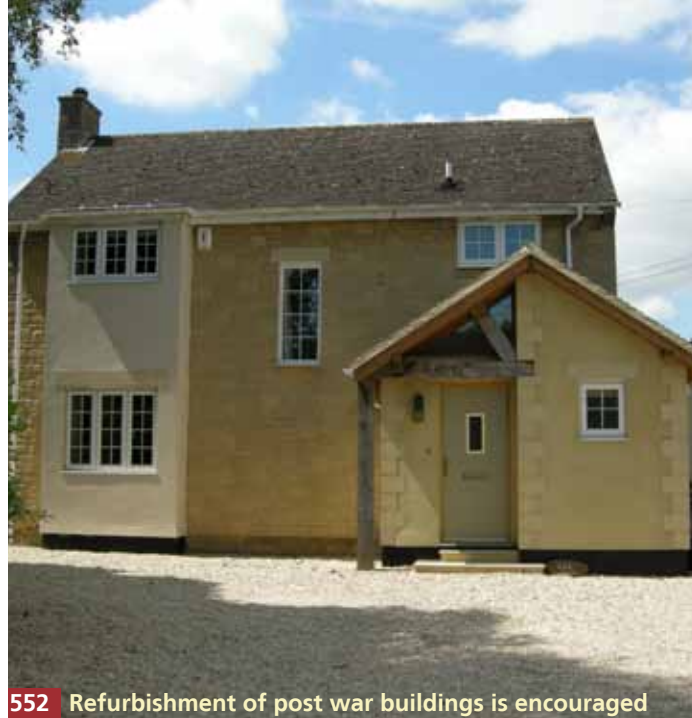
approach, however, may differ depending on the design and location of the building. For example, the post-war building boom resulted in many houses being built which are of neither good traditional or modern design. If refurbishment is being considered, then the opportunity should be taken to improve the appearance of such dwellings.

In more historic buildings, it is important to retain any features which contribute to the architectural character of the building. In the past, architectural features have often been removed and replaced in the mistaken belief that they cannot be repaired. Stripping the historic fabric should always be avoided and, wherever possible, architectural features should be retained and repaired

A key consideration in all refurbishments, but particularly for refurbishments of historic buildings, is the compatibility of modern building methods and materials. For example, historic buildings with solid wall construction are not compatible with modern cavity wall construction, as solid walls are designed to absorb moisture whereas cavity walls are designed to keep moisture out. Similarly, it is rarely successful to retrofit buildings with damp proof courses and concrete floors as these can restrict moisture movement and prematurely decay the building's fabric.

The choice of materials should be compatible with the building – for example, on historic buildings, lime mortar should be used on solid wall construction instead of modern cement as it allows the wall to breath. External paints should also be breathable, which will be compatible with the building and will help prevent peeling and cracking.

Where a refurbishment proposal includes an extension, reference should be made to the advice set out in section 4.6. The design of any extension should be appropriate to the scale, layout and design of the original building. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to design a light-weight modern extension rather than copy the style of the original building. Wherever possible, inappropriate modern additions should be removed as part of any refurbishment.



552 Refurbishment of post war buildings is encouraged



553 Historically and locally appropriate stone roof tiles



554 Extension appropriate in scale and design



555 Design award



556 Landscape retained



557 Original building



558 Appropriate paint

Density & Plot Coverage

Although relatively large, the extension to Church Villas is successful because the site is large enough to accommodate the development and it has been well designed with the use of good quality materials.

Design

The design of the extension to Church Villas is strongly influenced by the original house, but with a contemporary twist. The extension is subordinate to the original house and does not detract from the character or form of the original building.

The development was considered so successful that it was awarded a Design Award by the Council in 1991.

Landscaping & Materials

The dwelling is framed by mature landscaping, which helps soften the development and visually encloses the site.

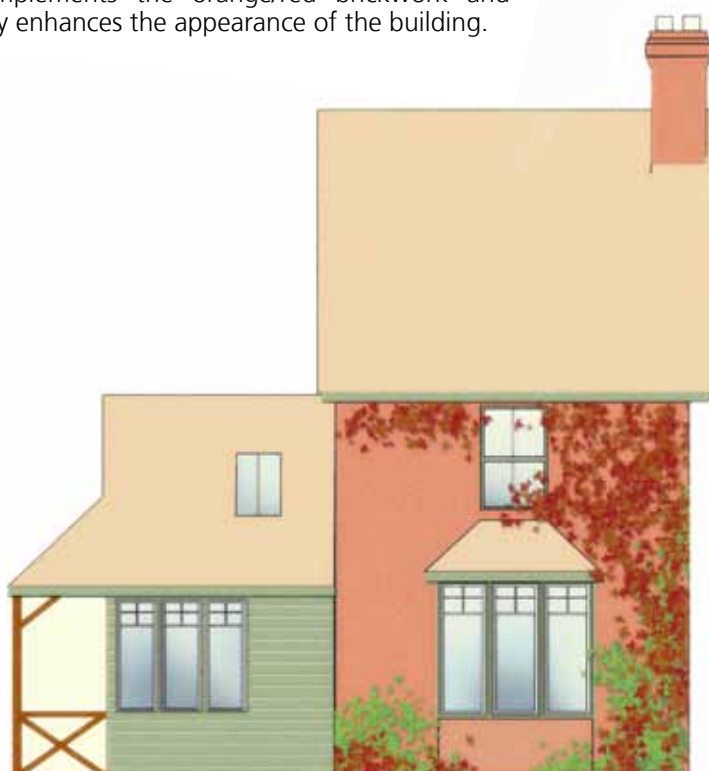
The palette of materials used on the extension is appropriate to the original dwelling, and the use of timber detailing on the light well is particularly successful. The use of clay tiles also successfully reflects the original roof tiles.

Paint

The original and new fenestration has been painted in a locally appropriate heritage colour. The choice of colour complements the orange/red brickwork and significantly enhances the appearance of the building.



559 Site layout



560 Elevation