Thinking about retrofit in a Conservation Area?

Join us Thursday 26th February 6:30pm
Kentish Town Community Centre
and ONLINE

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Camden Climate Fund

Camden

Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Background to Retrofit Kentish Town
- Outline of planning for conservation areas
  - Solar Panels
  - Air Source heat pumps
  - Insulation
  - Windows
  - Miscellaneous
  - Summary and Links
- Discussion for each subject
  - Resident perspective
  - Balance of Conservation vs Retrofit
  - Learning from other Boroughs / Counties
  - Asks to Camden Council and others
- Next steps

Notes in these boxes are by Retrofit Kentish Town, not by Camden Council.

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Outline of Planning and Conservation areas

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

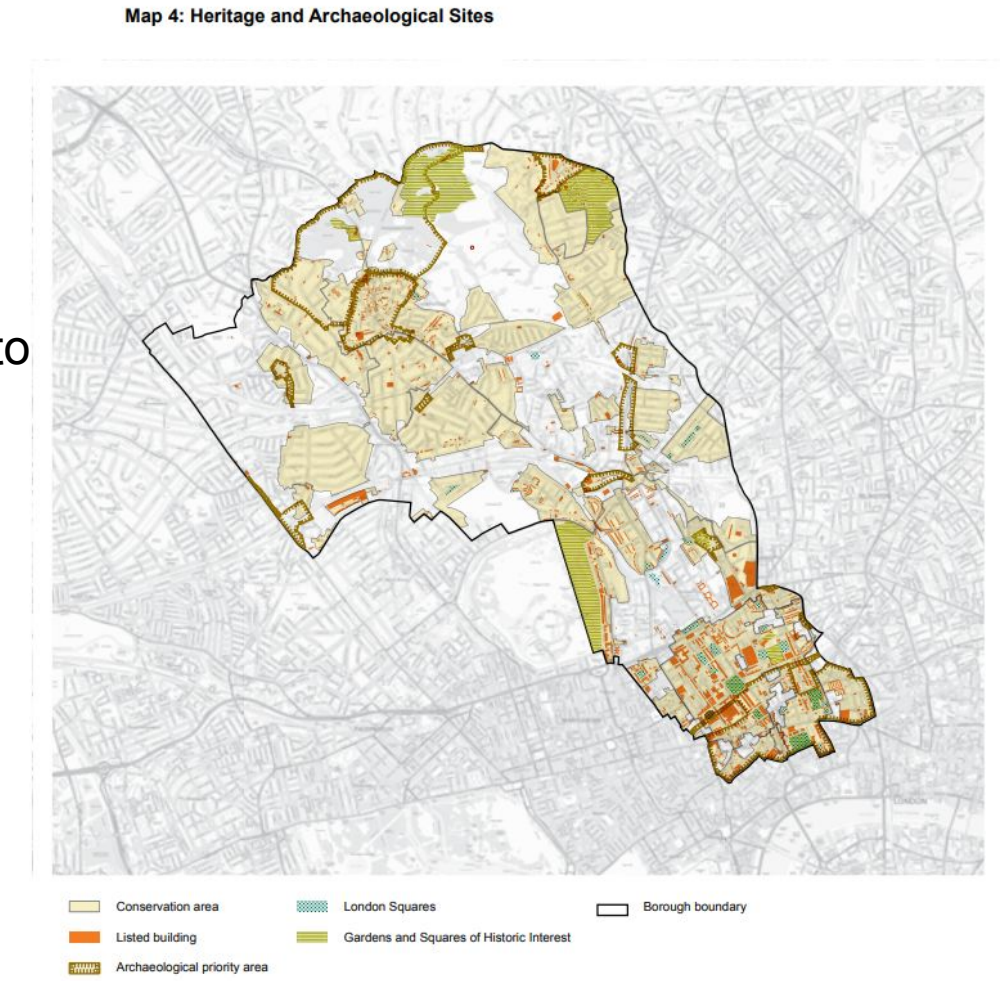
Conservation and Retrofit and the Camden Climate Fund Phase 4 (2025 – 2028)

Camden Climate Fund

Bethany Cullen, Head of Development Management
Steve Walters, Sustainability Officer
Colette Hatton, Senior Conservation Officer

Camden Climate Fund, Energy efficiency retrofit and conservation considerations:

- 40 conservation areas covering much of the borough.
- Over 5,600 listed buildings and structures.
- Want to encourage energy efficiency whilst protecting the boroughs heritage. Both are important strategic objectives to the Council reflected in planning policy and guidance.
- We have a legal obligation to protect heritage assets.
- NPPF 2024 – need to give ‘significant weight’ to support energy efficiency, but also apply heritage policies
- Relaunch of the Camden Climate Fund 2025-2028 (CCF)
- Free Pre app advice service for those applying to the CCF



When is Planning Permission required?

legislation.gov.uk

- Planning permission is only required for 'Development'.

- 'Development' is defined in law by Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- In summary, the legislation says that development are works which materially affect the external appearance or result in a material change of use of a building (or land).

- Works which do not materially affect the external appearance of a building do not require planning permission, but if a building is listed then listed building consent would still be required.

You can do some retrofitting works without planning permission; it does not matter if your home is a flat or house or whether it is in a conservation area:

- Roof insulation.
- Cavity wall insulation.
- Internal wall insulation.
- Floor insulation.
- Secondary glazing.
- Window replacements where they are a like for like replacement (size, material, colour design) but with double/triple rather than single glazing.

NB: These works to a listed building would still require listed building consent.

Permitted Development (PD)

It can be complicated!
… but there are professionals who know these issues well…

- Permitted Development (PD) rights allow certain building works to be carried out without a planning application.
- Permission is already granted for them by the General Permitted Development Order. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
- Schedule 2 Part 1, Class A relates to improvements to Houses (not flats).
- Schedule 2 Part 14 relates specifically to Renewable Energy. This gives PD rights to both residential (flats and houses) and non-residential properties.
- Article 4 Directions are used in some cases to remove PD rights Article 4 Directions (this means a planning application will be needed). These apply in some of our conservation areas and will impact on how much residents can rely on Part 1 or Part 14.
- At present there are Article 4 Directions which remove PD rights for Part 14 Renewable Energy in the following conservation areas: Hampstead, Belsize and South Hampstead we will be consulting in June/July 2025 to remove those restrictions.
- The fact that something is not PD and needs planning permission does not automatically mean it would not be acceptable.

Solar Panels

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Renewable Energy - what can I do as Permitted Development?

Whether you are a house, a flat, a block of flats and even in a conservation area you can do quite a bit under permitted development (subject to compliance with relevant conditions and there being no article 4 direction):

- Install Photovoltaics or Solar Panels - Yes, conditions apply.
- Install Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) – unconditional (within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or a block of flats)
- Install Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) - Yes, conditions apply.

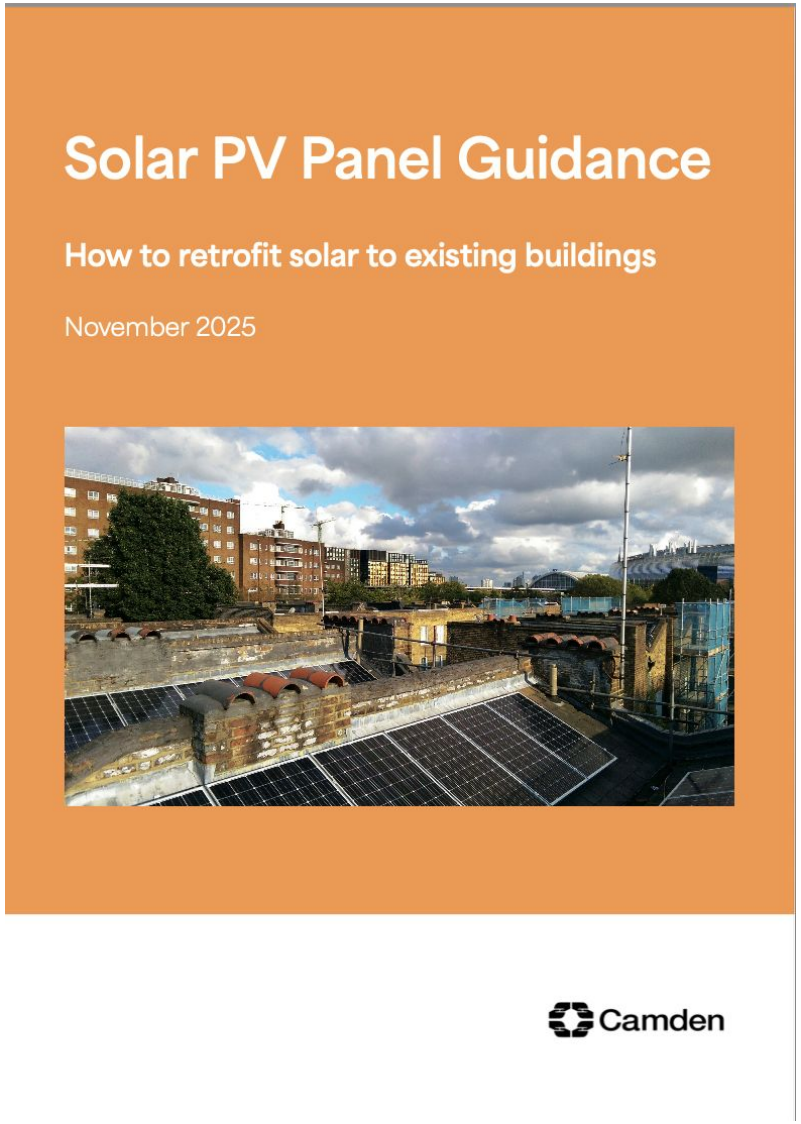
There are PD rights for other forms of renewable energy as well, but I have concentrated on those mostly commonly used by homeowners pursuing retrofitting projects.

Solar PV – renewable energy

- Electricity generation helps to balance energy demand (can be combined with batteries for energy storage and flexibility in demand)
- Ideally on south or west facing roofs but improvements in efficiency means can be on other elevations (avoid north facing)
- Consideration of overshadowing

Left Image Credit : Decarbonising Camden's Existing Buildings A technical evidence base for planning policy for Camden Council by Etude, Currie and Brown.

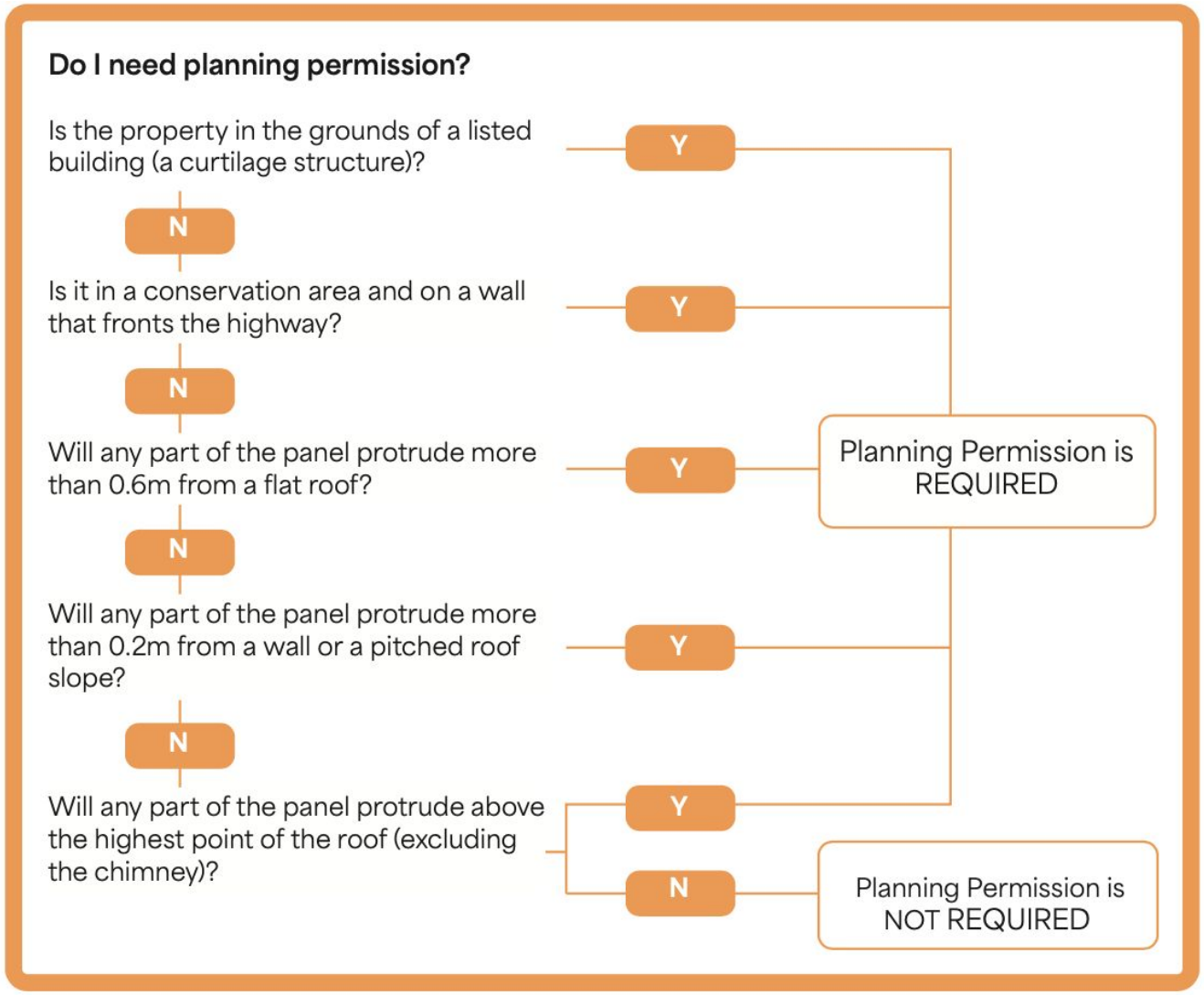
Solar PV Panels Guidance



See Solar PV Panel Guidance
https://retrofitkentishtown.org/planning/

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

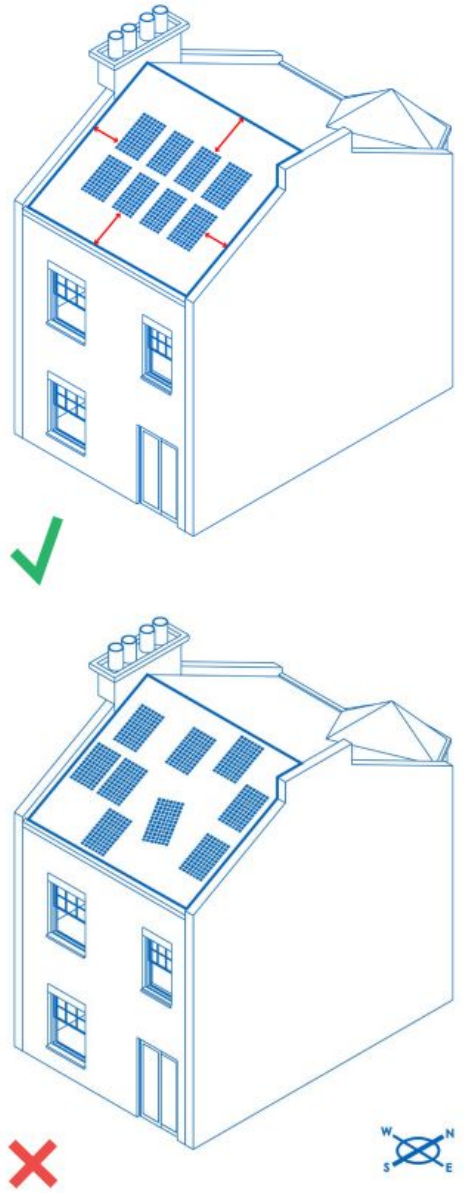
Solar Panels decision tree



KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Part 14 - Photovoltaics

- You can install, alter, or replace solar PV or solar thermal equipment **on a dwellinghouse** or **a block of flats**.
- There are restrictions, such as the equipment not protruding more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the wall or pitched roof slope, and not being higher than the highest part of the roof (excluding chimneys)
- If on a flat roof is should not be more than 0.6 metres higher than the highest part of the roof.
- If in a CA must not be on a wall which fronts the highway.
- Not permitted development on Listed Buildings.
- The equipment should be sited to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area (so ideally try to avoid putting on the front roofslope unless this is the only option).
- The equipment must be removed as soon as reasonably practicable when it is no longer needed.



CPG Home Improvements pg. 26

Solar PV – Conservation considerations

- Solar panels are PD on front, rear and side roof slopes within CA.
- Solar panels are supported on listed buildings where they are located away from principal roof slopes. The least historically sensitive position should be sought.
- Planning permission is required for the installation of solar panels within conservation areas where there is an article 4 direction removing PD rights.
- Solar slates are sometimes an option – however their appearance is usually inferior to traditional slates so this would have to be considered carefully.

Conservation areas with Article 4 direction - Hampstead and Belsize park…?

Removal of Article 4 Direction

Specifically on the removal of Article 4 Direction in Belsize South Hampstead and Hampstead from June 26, I found this:
https://consultations.wearecamden.org/culture-environment/hampstead-south-hampstead-and-belsize-conservation/

"We are reviewing the Article 4 Directions in the borough that relate to conservation areas, including the existing Article 4 Directions in Hampstead, South Hampstead and Belsize Conservation Areas. The existing Article 4 in place for Hampstead, South Hampstead and Belsize Conservation Areas means planning permission is required to install Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels or solar thermal equipment at the front or side of a property. It is proposed to replace this with a new Article 4 Direction, which would mean that these works would no longer require planning permission.

Why are we making the new Article 4 Directions?

In September 2010 Article 4 Directions were made covering Hampstead, South Hampstead and Belsize Conservation Areas.

To make the installation of these easier, a new Article 4 Direction was made on 9 June 2025. These are identical to the existing Directions, with the exception that they will no longer cover the following:

- installation, alteration or replacement of microgeneration solar PV or solar thermal equipment on a dwellinghouse or a block of flats; or a building situated within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or a block of flats,
- installation, alteration or replacement of stand-alone solar for microgeneration within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or a block of flats.

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Removal of Article 4 Direction

What happens next?

If these Article 4 Directions are confirmed by the Council they will come into force in June 2026, and at the same time, the 2010 Article 4 Directions will be cancelled.

From this date the installation of PV Solar Panel and Solar Thermal equipment would not require planning permission (under Schedule 2 Part 14 of the 2015 GPDO), provided that certain requirements are met*. All other works covered by the 2010 Direction will remain and be included in the new Direction.

*The requirements include the following:

PV Solar Panels and solar thermal equipment:

- do not protrude more than 20cm beyond the plane of a wall or roof,
- would not be higher than the highest part of the roof,
- are not installed on a wall which fronts a highway,
- are not installed on a listed building, are sited, so far as practicable, to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building,
- are removed, as soon as practicable when no longer needed.

Stand-alone solar

- no more than 1 is installed within the curtilage of the building,
- is not more than 2 metres in height, where it is on land between a highway and dwelling house or block of flats. Elsewhere it must not exceed 4 metres in height,
- is not installed within 5 metres of the boundary
- is not installed within the curtilage of a listed building
- are sited, so far as practicable, to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building,
- are removed, as soon as practicable when no longer needed."

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Discussion

How did this change come about - who did what?
Resident perspective and experience
Balance of Conservation vs Retrofit
Learning from other Boroughs / Counties
Asks to Camden Council and others

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Air Source Heat Pumps

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Heat Pumps – Renewable Energy

Air source heat pumps (ASHP):

- Residential usually **air to water** (radiators or underfloor heating) needs large heat emitter so can be suitable for big old radiators in heritage buildings. Preferable to have underfloor heating.
- Don’t need to insulate first but would lower heat demand and will enable energy bill savings. Bill savings will also depend on what is being replaced – most savings if replace storage heaters or inefficient boiler
- Permitted development rules currently:
  - Only if heating (not cooling)
  - Complies with MCS planning standards
  - Volume of outdoor unit not over 0.6m3 (additional units need permission)
  - On flat roof more than 1m from edge
  - Not permitted development on Listed building or wall which fronts highway in conservation area
- Commercial development or small flats more likely to propose **air to air** – but can be reversed for cooling – need to prove overheating risk or disable cooling

Image credit: Decarbonising Camden's Existing Buildings A technical evidence base for planning policy for Camden Council by Etude, Currie and Brown

Heat Pumps – Conservation considerations

- Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) for heating will generally be supported.
- The plant should be positioned sensitively and should avoid compromising any historical architectural features.
- Current permitted development (rules include volume of unit under 0.6m2, not within 1m of boundary or edge of flat roof, not on wall which fronts a highway, not on a Listed Building)

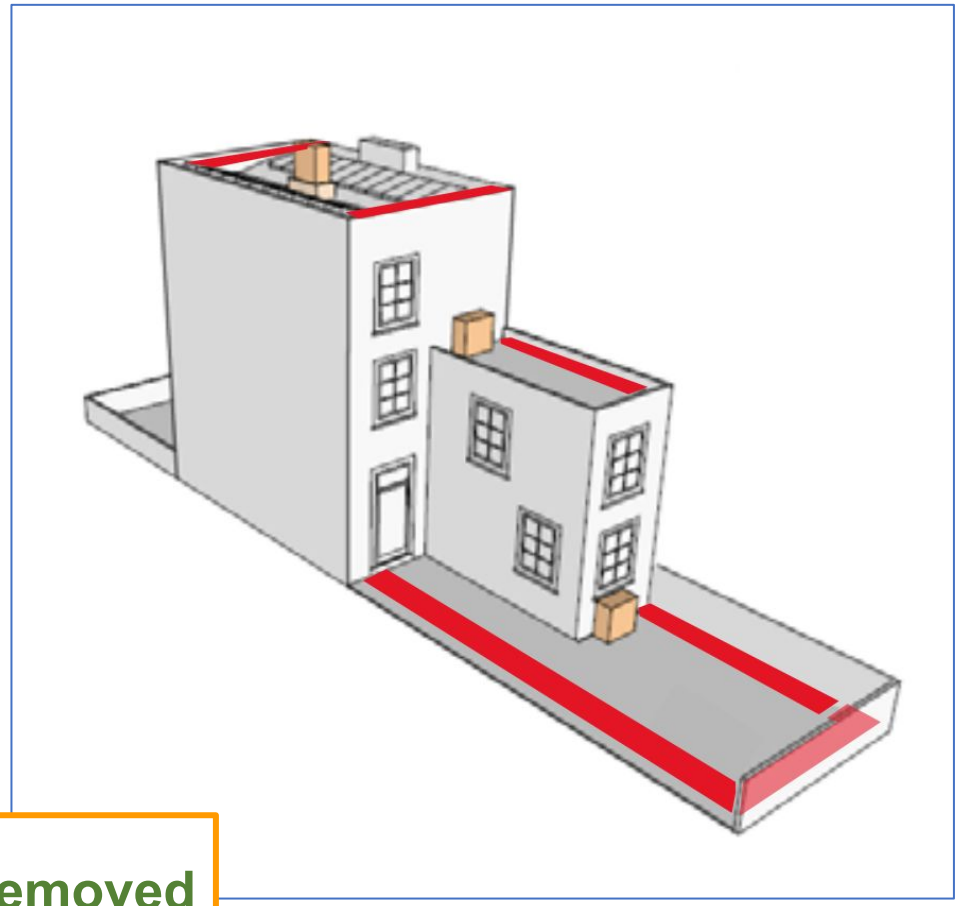


Image Credit: London Borough of Islington

This has now been removed in May 2025 through National Changes to Permitted Development

Part 14 - Air Source Heat Pumps

- You can install, alter, or replace a ASHP on or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or a block of flats.
- The ASHP must comply with the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) Planning Standards or equivalent.
- The volume of the ASHP's outdoor compressor unit must not exceed 0.6 cubic metres.
- Only one ASHP is allowed per property.
- The ASHP must be at least one metre away from the property boundary.
- Installations on pitched roofs are not permitted development. If installed on a flat roof, all parts of the ASHP must be at least one metre from the external edge of the roof.
- Permitted development rights **do not apply to a LB**.
- **In CAs the ASHP must not be installed on a wall or roof that fronts a highway.**
- The ASHP must be used solely for heating purposes.
- It should be sited to minimize its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.
- The ASHP must be removed as soon as reasonably practicable when it is no longer needed.

This has now been revised….

This has now been revised to 1.5m3

This has now been removed….

Changes to Permitted Development

Reonic Products Solutions Resources About Us Login Book a demo

Heat Pump Regulations 2025: What UK Installers & Homeowners Must Know

Explore the key UK regulations on heat pumps coming into force in 2025 – planning rights, certification, new home requirements and what installers and homeowners need to prepare.

https://reonic.com/en-gb/blog/heatpump-regulations-2025/

There are detailed considerations regarding acoustics and locations near windows. Ask a professional / installer. MCS compliance is needed.

Key Regulatory Changes in 2025 for Heat Pumps

Here are the most significant regulatory changes affecting heat-pump installations in 2025, with what they mean in practice.

1. Permitted Development Right (PDR) Changes – England

From 29 May 2025, changes to PDR for heat pumps include:

- Removal of the 1 metre boundary requirement (from property boundary) for air-source-heat-pump (ASHP) installations.
- Increase in the maximum unit size for a dwelling from 0.6 m^3 to 1.5 m^3 under PDR.
- Detached houses allowed to install up to two heat pumps under PDR.
- Inclusion of air-to-air systems (which provide cooling) under the same PDR rules.
  Impact: Fewer planning hurdles, shorter lead-times, broader home types now eligible. For installers this means more business opportunities and fewer delays; for homeowners simpler process.

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Discussion

Resident perspective and experience
Balance of Conservation vs Retrofit
Learning from other Boroughs / Counties
Asks to Camden Council and others

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Insulation

KT RETROFIT
KENTISH TOWN

Insulation – energy efficiency

Loft insulation -

- Recommended 270mm thick standard. Can ‘top up’. Won’t need planning permission – often DIY
- Should insulate pipes or water tank in cold loft space and loft hatch
- Quick payback – saves £100s per year

Roof insulation -

- Room in roof or flat roof more expensive but still effective.
- Insulation boards between rafters most common
- Preferable to insulate flat roof from above (so will add to height) can do underneath but needs to be done carefully to avoid damp issues from thermal bridges. Could incorporate blue to green roof. May need planning permission.

Floor insulation –

- Between or under floors – won’t need planning permission unless LB
- Carpet also effective (but won’t get CCF and doesn’t need planning permission)

Image credit: Decarbonising Camden's Existing Buildings A technical evidence base for planning policy for Camden Council by Etude, Currie and Brown

Insulation – energy efficiency

Wall insulation:

- Most effective single measure – 19-55% heat loss reduction (according to DEEP study)
- SWI - Solid wall insulation
- CWI - Cavity wall insulation (not applicable to historic buildings)

Cavity wall

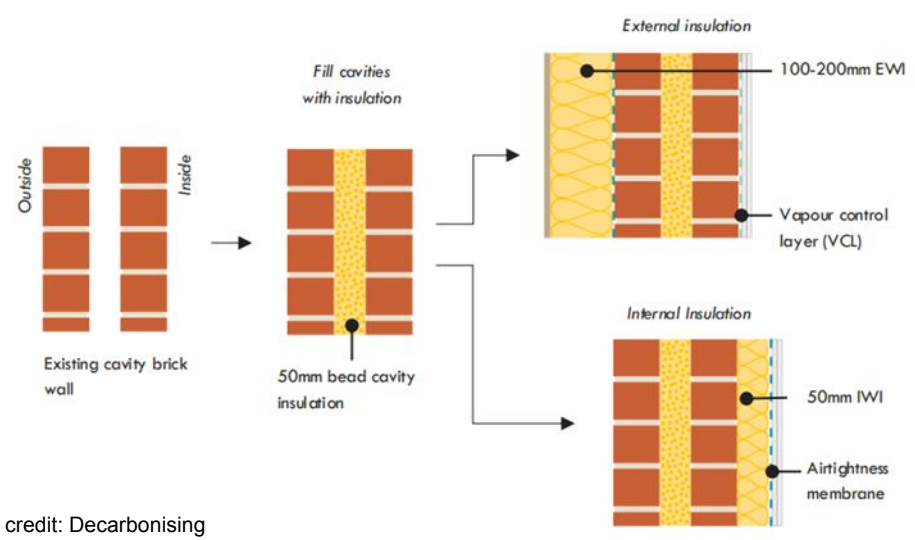
Solid wall

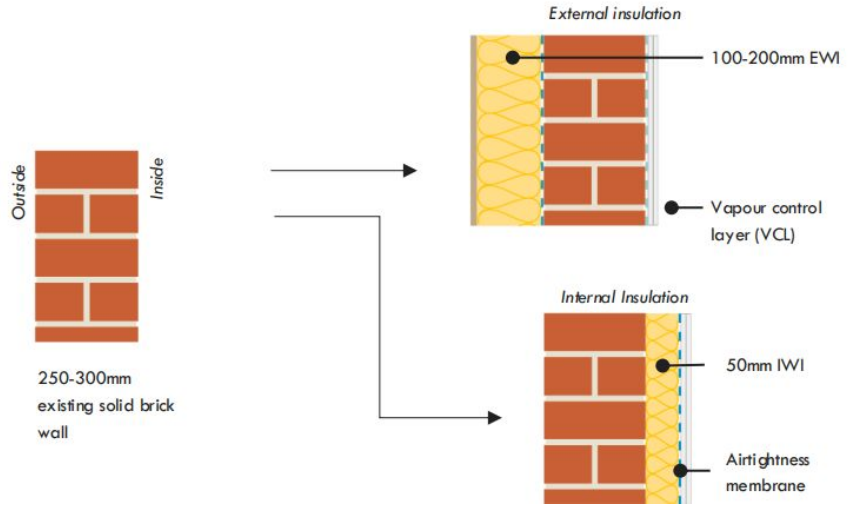
Solid wall

Insulation – energy efficiency

Wall insulation:

- **Cavity wall Insulation –** (CWI) most homes built since the 1930's have a cavity. Insulation can be injected into the cavity from the outside. Usually mineral wool or polystyrene beads. Relatively cheap and not disruptive.
- **Internal wall insulation** (IWI) – more disruptive especially in kitchens and bathrooms – need to move plumbing and electrics. About 50mm thick





Images credit: Decarbonising Camden's Existing Buildings A technical evidence base for planning policy for Camden Council by Etude, Currie and Brown.

Insulation – energy efficiency

Wall insulation:

- **External wall insulation** (EWI) – more expensive, less disruptive. 60-100mm thick but not considered an ‘enlargement’ – should have similar appearance – can have render or ‘brick slip’ finishes
- Potential to **combine** – IWI at front elevations in conservation area, EWI at rear (kitchens and bathrooms) but consider heritage. Needs to be carefully designed to limit gaps / thermal bridging
- Need to take account of **water vapour** – continuous vapour barriers or breathable materials depending on the situation. Advise specialist installer - **Ofgem approved / SWIGA guarantee. PAS 2030** – standard for installing energy efficiency measures in existing buildings
- PAS 2035 is the design standard (Retrofit Coordinator)

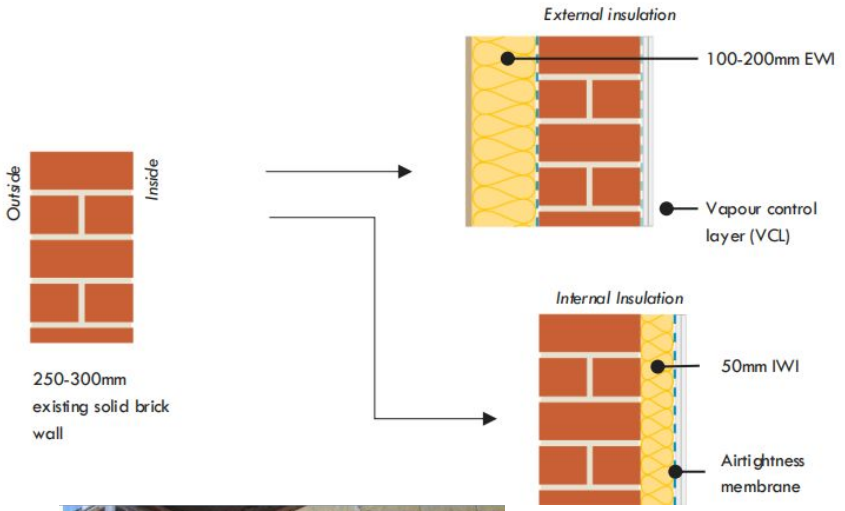
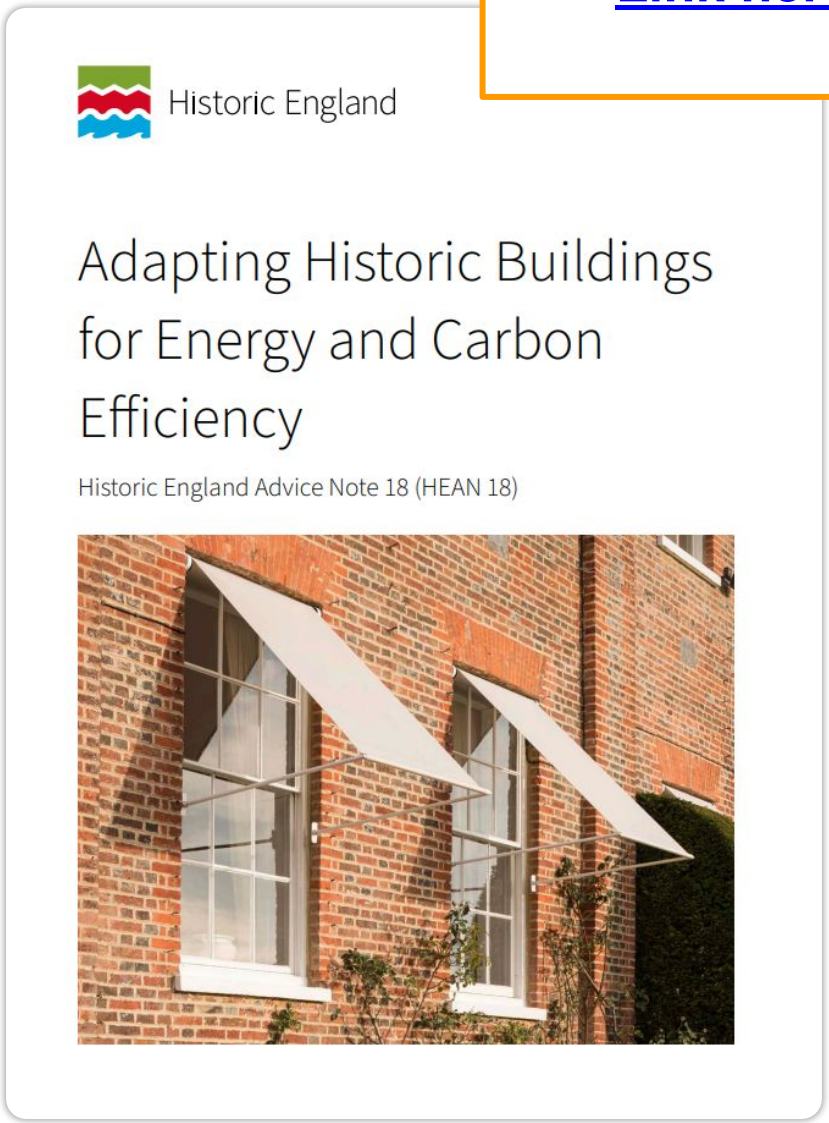


Image above credit: Decarbonising Camden's Existing Buildings A technical evidence base for planning policy for Camden Council by Etude, Currie and Brown. Image left credit: Katherine Frost – EWI being installed

Insulation – conservation considerations

Link here

- **Loft insulation** – generally acceptable – but not the spray on type as non permeable and difficult to remove.
- **Floor insulation** – generally acceptable unless undue harm to historic floor surfaces in Listed Buildings.
- **External Wall Insulation** - unlikely to be acceptable for Listed Buildings or buildings in conservation areas. In Conservation Areas where walls are already rendered to the rear or the side maybe acceptable if fitted by a heritage specialist.
- **Internal wall insulation** - will be acceptable in some cases for Listed buildings and usually acceptable in conservation areas.



Houses - what can I do as Permitted Development?

Houses inside and outside Conservation Areas

- Replacement windows (conditioned must be similar materials).
- External window shutters (conditioned must be similar materials).

Houses outside Conservation Areas (only)

- External wall insulation (conditioned must be similar materials)

Planning permission is required for these works to any flat or block of flats and on houses in conservation areas where there is an article 4 direction removing the PD rights under Part 1 Class A. Listed building consent would also be required when a building is a listed building.

Discussion

Resident perspective and experience
Balance of Conservation vs Retrofit
Learning from other Boroughs / Counties
Asks to Camden Council and others

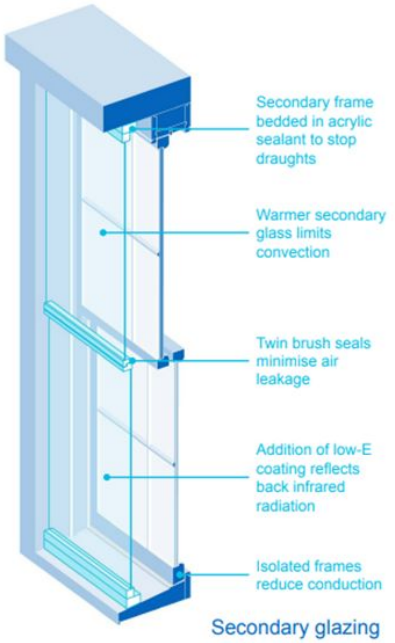
KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Windows

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Glazing – energy efficiency

- **Double or Triple Glazing** – improves energy efficiency (u-value) but long payback period in terms of carbon/energy saved so only eligible for CCF if with other measures
- **Secondary glazing –** similar energy efficiency to double glazing
- New glass such as **mono laminated** or **slim profile double glazing** or **vacuum double glazing** but can be expensive.
- Also consider lower g-values – to **reduce solar gain** / overheating
- Trickle vents can reduce condensation/damp risk



Top image credit: Decarbonising Camden's Existing Buildings A technical evidence base for planning policy for Camden Council by Etude, Currie and Brown.

Left image credit CPG Home Improvements

Glazing – Conservation considerations

- Double glazing in CAs generally acceptable where it does not impact historic detailing. For example, intricate and/or decorative glazing should be retained.
- Double glazing in listed buildings is acceptable if it is replacing a modern window, if it does not replace historic glass, and where it can be fitted into the historic frames.
- Secondary glazing is acceptable in CAs, and also in listed buildings where it does not impact historic detail, for example joinery around the window

Image Credits: CPG Home Improvements

Houses - what can I do as Permitted Development?

Houses inside and outside Conservation Areas

- Replacement windows (conditioned must be similar materials).
- External window shutters (conditioned must be similar materials).

Houses outside Conservation Areas (only)

- External wall insulation (conditioned must be similar materials)

Planning permission is required for these works to any flat or block of flats and on houses in conservation areas where there is an article 4 direction removing the PD rights under Part 1 Class A. Listed building consent would also be required when a building is a listed building.

Discussion

Resident perspective and experience
Balance of Conservation vs Retrofit
Learning from other Boroughs / Counties
Asks to Camden Council and others

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Miscellaneous

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Other Retrofit measures

LED or low energy lighting – unlikely to need planning permission

External shading – external blinds / brise soliel:

- Can save carbon by reducing cooling demand or minimising need to cooling but unlikely to be mentioned on an EPC / Whole house retrofit plan and difficult to quantify the carbon saving but could be eligible for CCF if can be measured.
- Need planning permission on Listed buildings / front of homes in conservation areas – maybe acceptable

Internal shading - shutters / internal blinds:

- Usually acceptable. Listed Building consent required.

Discussion

Resident perspective and experience
Balance of Conservation vs Retrofit
Learning from other Boroughs / Counties
Asks to Camden Council and others

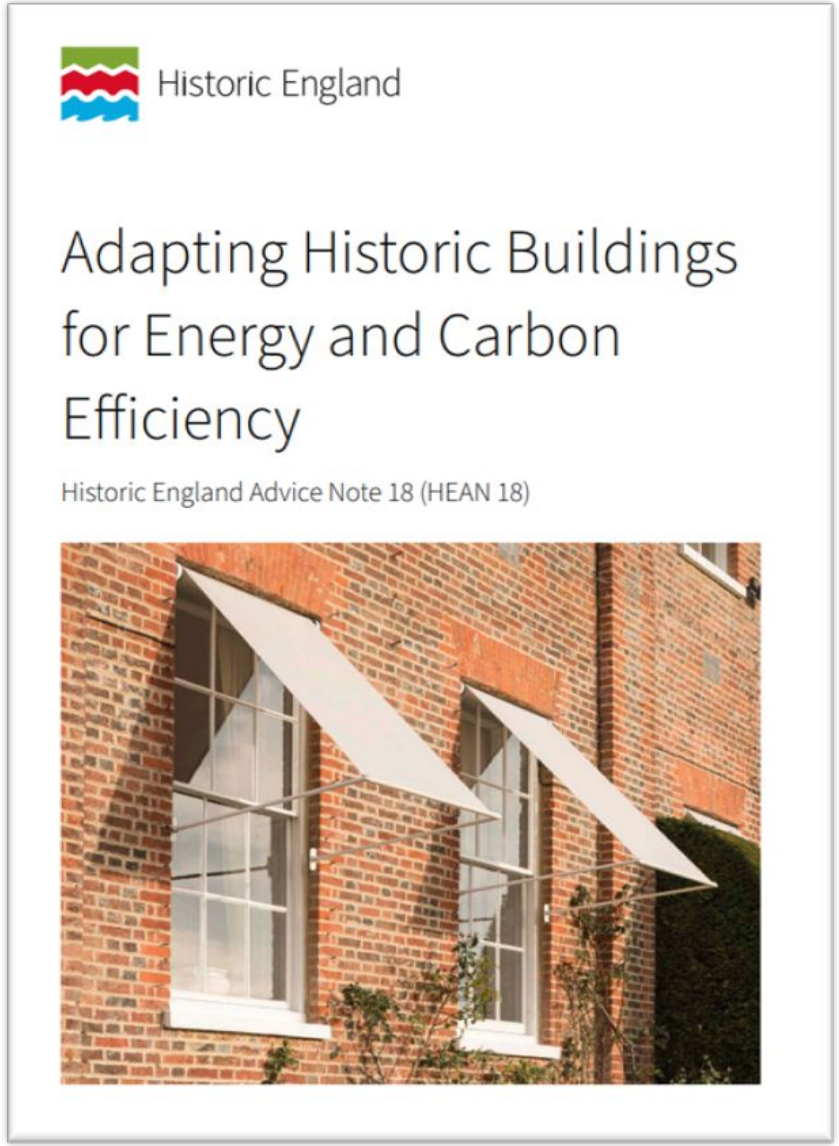
KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Summary and Links

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN

Summary:

- If apply for **Camden Climate Fund** can have **free pre app** advice
- **Loft insulation** – Not development / generally acceptable for LB depending on the type but should be considered
- **Floor insulation** – Not development / generally acceptable (consider in Listed Buildings)
- **External Wall Insulation** – PD with conditions outside CA/ unlikely to be acceptable for Listed Buildings or front and visible sides of buildings in conservation areas but might be acceptable at the rear in CA.
- **Internal wall insulation** – Not development / unlikely acceptable for LB
- **Secondary glazing** – Not development /acceptable if doesn't impact historic detail in LB
- **Double glazing** – In many cases PD with conditions, generally acceptable in LB but shouldn't replace historic glass.
- **Heat pumps –** In many cases PD, generally accepted. Site carefully.
- **Solar panels -** In many cases PD, generally supported on listed buildings where they are located away from principal roofslopes. Planning permission required for article 4 areas for now.



Listed building consent

Irrespective of whether or not planning permission is required, if a property is listed then internal and external works to it will require listed building consent.

Search the List – Find listed buildings, monuments, battlefields and more | Historic England

What can I do?

- Environmental Performance Certificate (EPC) – required for homes sold or let since 2008. Consider the recommended measures to improve the energy efficiency of your property.

- The Camden Home Improvements guidance, which outlines energy efficiency measures and related planning considerations

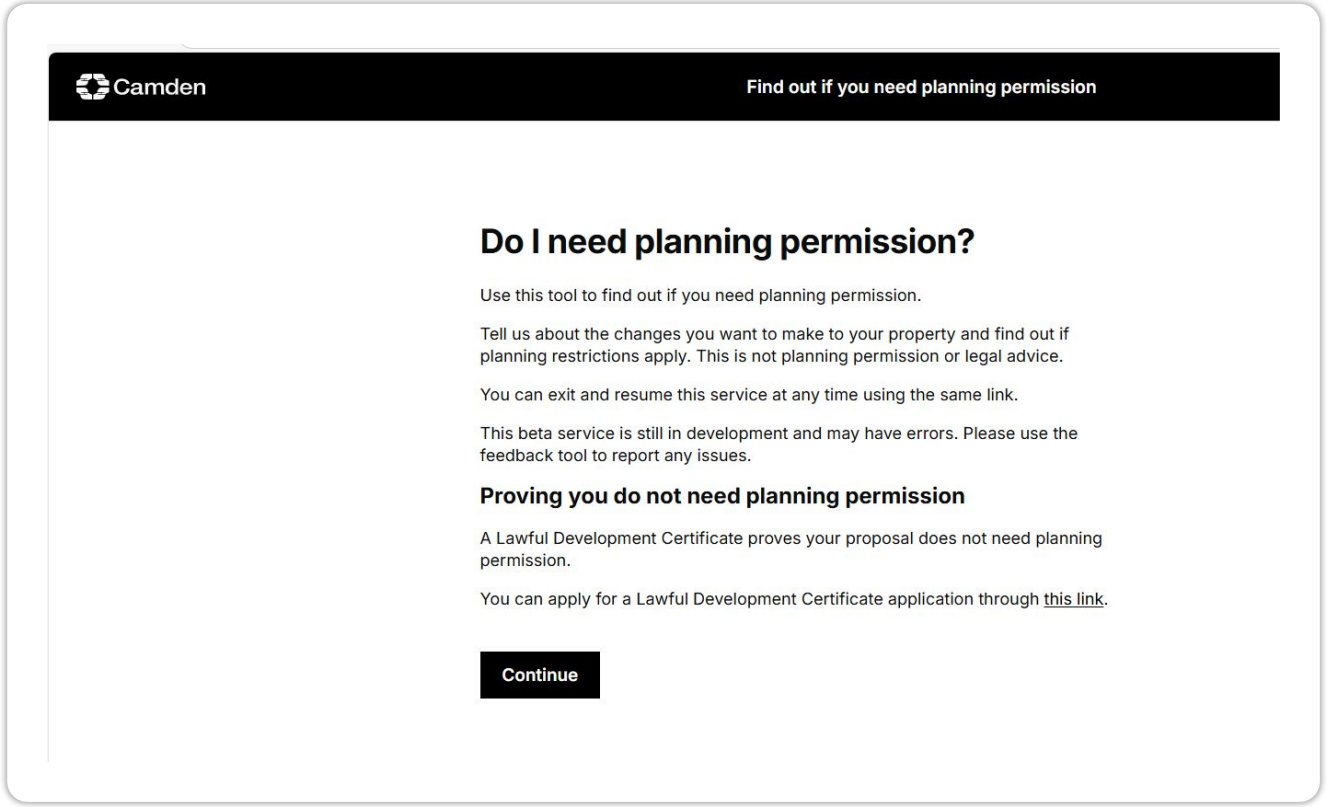
- Camden Council advice on how to make your home more energy efficient

- Advice agencies such as Energy Savings Trust

- Whole House Retrofit Plan – will provide a roadmap to making your home as energy efficient as possible if you are still not sure where to start.

Can I do it …

- The ‘Do I Need Planning Permission?’ online portal
- Free pre-application advice for Camden Climate Fund applicants who submit an Expression of Interest or full application



For a pre-app, drawings will be needed to explain what you want to do.

Useful links…

Plan X – do I need planning permission

Camden Climate Fund

Historic England guidance

Save energy and keep warm homepage

Energy efficiency grants for private residents

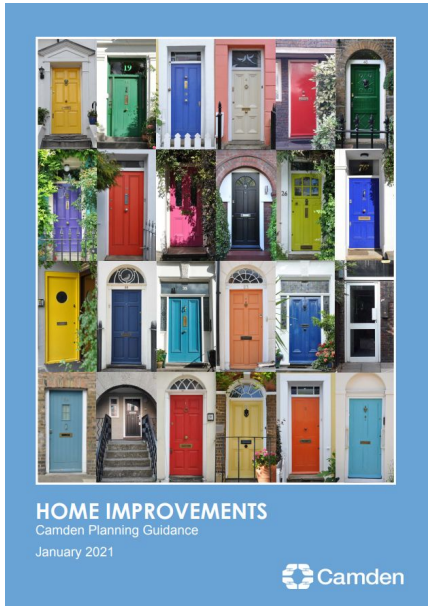
How to make your home more efficient

Home Improvements CPG

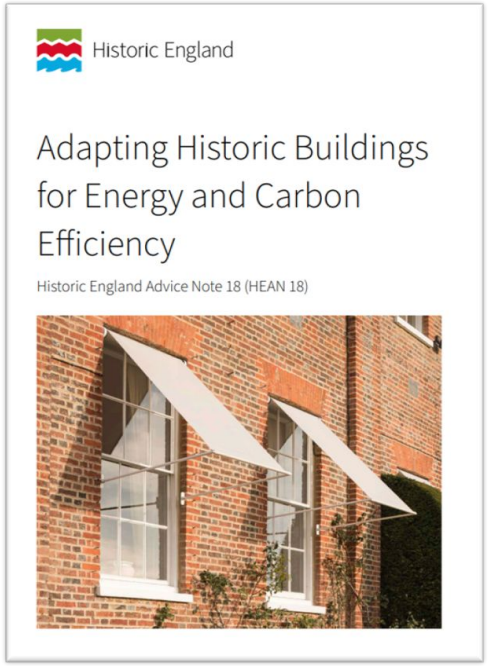
Retrofit – Housing proforma

Retrofit – Corporate proforma

MCS



Camden Climate Fund



Next steps

Please give us feedback!

KT RETROFIT KENTISH TOWN