



Historic England

Domestic 3: Suburban and Country Houses

Listing Selection Guide



Summary

Historic England's twenty listing selection guides help to define which historic buildings are likely to meet the relevant tests for national designation and be included on the National Heritage List for England. Listing has been in place since 1947 and operates under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. If a building is felt to meet the necessary standards, it is added to the List. This decision is taken by the Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). These selection guides were originally produced by English Heritage in 2011: slightly revised versions are now being published by its successor body, Historic England.

The DCMS' *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings* set out the over-arching criteria of special architectural or historic interest required for listing and the guides provide more detail of relevant considerations for determining such interest for particular building types. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/principles-of-selection-for-listing-buildings>.

Each guide falls into two halves. The first defines the types of structures included in it, before going on to give a brisk overview of their characteristics and how these developed through time, with notice of the main architects and representative examples of buildings. The second half of the guide sets out the particular tests in terms of its architectural or historic interest a building has to meet if it is to be listed. A select bibliography gives suggestions for further reading.

This guide, one of four on different types of Domestic Buildings, covers suburban and country houses. The other three Domestic Buildings selection guides cover Vernacular houses, Town houses, and Modern houses and housing.

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Front cover

Gunton Park, Norfolk. The original house by Matthew Brettingham, begun 1742, had additions including the colonnade by the Wyatts in 1780-5. Gutted by fire

in 1882, it was rebuilt by Kit Martin within the shell in 1982-5. Listed Grade II*.

Introduction

Be they suburban or rural, country houses, villas, and semi-detached houses share certain characteristics. Principally they are defined by the space around them. They take advantage of more generous ground plots and are laid out with more freedom than their urban equivalent. Being set in substantial gardens or forming part of a larger estate, they have a different relationship with nature and can be part of distinct individual landscapes. Additionally, being located sometimes some distance away from normal places of work, for their owners they can possess a repose and a detachment that makes for special architectural interest, and has led to some of the finest houses in England.

The country house in particular has a special place in English architectural history, and constitutes one of the most internationally respected areas of English architecture. Many survive, often retaining evidence of their evolution from the medieval and early modern periods. A great country house, such as Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (designed by John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor, 1706-29; listed Grade I; Fig 2), is so highly regarded as to have been inscribed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. That said, the evolution of the country house is so complex, and has been so comprehensively written about by others, that no concerted attempt is made here to offer a systematic overview.

Country houses ranged widely in scale and extent, from the grandest of set pieces to more modest manor and dower houses. They also combine numerous functions, from being conscious displays of status and power such as Wollaton Hall, Nottingham (designed by Robert Smythson, 1580-88; listed Grade I), to more administrative ones such as being the centres of estate management, to those of retirement and straightforward residence such as Adcote, Shropshire, designed by Richard Norman Shaw –

a modestly sized but sophisticated country house of 1876-81 (listed Grade I).

The term ‘country house’ now carries a distinct meaning: that of a large residence of some status, set within extensive grounds. Further down the scale there are other kinds of house (or rural retreat) for the wealthy, or later for the professional classes, and these are often similar to vernacular and garden buildings; an example is the larger farm house such as Mace’s in Wick Rissington, Gloucestershire, of the mid-seventeenth century (listed Grade II). A distinct category among rural houses of some scale is the vicarage, which shared many characteristics with the smaller country house.

Rather than repeat existing literature on these country houses, this guide concentrates on smaller, often suburban, detached and semi-detached private houses or villas which are very frequent candidates for listing and on which more guidance and explanation is perhaps required. It considers the period when the characteristics of the modern suburb as we know it today emerged, where the residents are largely dependent upon the town for work, shopping and socialising and the character is predominantly residential.



Figure 1
This pair of neo-classical stuccoed villas of the mid-nineteenth century in Bedford demonstrates

the introduction of the semi-detached house as an essential component of suburbia. Listed Grade II.

Chronologically this guide stops in the early twentieth century when domestic architecture was in transition and the State was beginning to intervene in residential development. The establishment of the Garden City Movement, the need for greater economy following the First World War, and housing and town planning legislation, ushered in a new era of housing reform. The results of these important developments are discussed in a separate selection guide: [The Modern House and Housing](#). However, as suburban expansion and rural suburbanisation continued apace in the Edwardian and interwar years some overlap is unavoidable. We should remember that a considerable proportion of the country's building

stock still dates from these great surges of later Victorian, Edwardian and interwar suburban development that are among England's most influential contributions to architecture worldwide.

Whereas major country houses are distinctive as the country residences of wealthy people, and centres of local or even national power, smaller country houses shade imperceptibly into other kinds of rural and suburban housing with inevitable overlaps with the other Domestic selection guides. Older rural houses are partly covered in that for [Vernacular Houses](#); there is some overlap of suburban houses with that for [Town Houses](#); and suburban working-class housing, principally the appearance



Figure 2
Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire designed by Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor, and built between 1706-29 represents the English

country house at its most significant. Listed Grade I it is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

of council housing and the impact of the Garden City Movement, is considered in the Selection Guide for [The Modern House and Housing](#). Housing for workers on country

estates is covered in the [Agricultural Buildings](#) selection guide, while garden and landscape structures are covered by the selection guide for [Garden and Park Structures](#).

1 Historical Summary

1.1 The country house

Listing, and the related provision of grant aid for listed buildings from 1954 onwards, were at least in part intended to save the English country house which had been under considerable threat during the first 50 years of the twentieth century. It is therefore no surprise to find that sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century country houses were included in the lists from an early period, and that Victorian and later houses were sometimes included too. Lutyens' late classical house, Gledstone Hall in North Yorkshire (1925-7), was listed (at Grade II*) within 30 years of being built, whilst the same architect's Middleton Park, Oxfordshire (generally regarded as the last great country house to be built in England) was completed in 1938 and listed at Grade I in 1951. Both are powerful reminders that listing does not privilege only the progressive styles of the twentieth century at the expense of tradition if the building possesses the special architectural or historic interest necessary for listing.

The country house (or Great House) emerged during the later medieval period from castle and palace building and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish whether castles were actually defensive, rather than domestic, in character. Stokesay Castle, Shropshire, (listed Grade I), for example, might be seen as little more than a modestly defended late thirteenth-century hall with a single strong defensive tower, whilst both the keep of Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire (1612-21; listed Grade I), and Burton Hall, Cheshire (listed Grade II*) of the early seventeenth century were self-consciously invoking the medieval castle. Halls had formed the centre of domestic sites for centuries before they became ubiquitous in houses above cottage scale during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The greater English late

medieval house (typically with a hall, apartments, a chapel and service quarters, coupled with ranges of lodgings not unlike an Oxbridge college) began to be influenced by the revival of antique learning centred in Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century, although unlike Central Europe, full-blown Italian Renaissance buildings were rare if not entirely unknown. By 1600, however, such Renaissance traits as axial symmetry and classical detail were becoming fashionable. It was only in the 1620s and 1630s that Italian, French and Dutch variations on the antique proportions proclaimed by the Roman architect/scholar Vitruvius became widely acceptable, and his principles of 'firmness, commodity and delight' were passed into English through a loose translation by Sir Henry Wotton. Inigo Jones offered a purer reading of classicism from true Italian sources in these years, but his work was politically associated with court circles. Many architectural types, including the plain terraced house (see the [Town House](#) selection guide) and the plain but pedimented country house such as Tintinhull, Somerset (listed Grade I), were developed at this time and continued in widespread use for two centuries and more. The compact house plan, with double- and triple-pile variants, was to prove popular until picturesque variety broke up massing in the later eighteenth century.

England only accepted the baroque style for houses such as Blenheim (Oxfordshire), Castle Howard (North Yorkshire), and Seaton Delaval (Northumberland) with difficulty, and was relieved to finally fully adopt the Italian classicism of Andrea Palladio. Classicism became the Georgian style in English and the beau ideal of the English country seat. That has pertained to such an extent that Gothic Revival country houses, of which harbingers can be seen in the later eighteenth century and which had a brief and powerful



Figure 3

Osborne House, Isle of Wight, designed by Prince Albert in association with the master-builder Thomas Cubitt, 1846-51, employed an Italianate style which exerted

a considerable influence over suburban middle-class housing of the following decades. Listed Grade I.

flowering during the mid-nineteenth century, were often Georgianised in the twentieth century. That said, the Victorian great house was as likely, however, to have been in Tudor, Elizabethan or Jacobean styles (or a mixture of all three), more loosely massed and sometimes to be realised on a huge scale as at Harlaxton Manor, Lincolnshire, of 1832-44 (listed Grade I). During the Victorian period, planning became ever more complex and subsidiary buildings grew in complexity and size. Clients were often keen to incorporate the latest technological developments in their new houses such as Sir William Armstrong's incorporation of hydro-electric power generated within the grounds of his own house, Cragside, Northumberland (Richard Norman Shaw, 1870-85; listed Grade I) – one of the earliest applications of such technology in the world (and see too Fig 4). A last bloom of the Great House came in the 1890s and 1900s, often made possible

through new commercial fortunes, when the Gothic Revival gave way to carefully considered historical sources from seventeenth-century neo-vernacular traditions (the Arts and Crafts Movement) and to a further classical revival.

An agricultural depression, which lasted from the 1870s until the Second World War, and death duties (introduced in 1894), played a major part in breaking up landed estates. Life-styles were changing too, and many families found the maintenance of a great house – or houses – impossible. Complete interiors were sold abroad, as at Sutton Scarsdale, Derbyshire (1724-28; listed Grade I), reduced to a gaunt ruin when in 1920 its interiors were sold to the United States. For the first time for many years, country house design was no longer at the vanguard of architectural attention, although houses in traditional styles and often of considerable interest continued to

be built, principally to neo-Georgian or mock-Tudor designs (Fig 13); many were illustrated in the pages of *Country Life* magazine (begun in 1897). Demolition of older larger houses reached a peak in the 1950s, before taxation changes and attitudes to wealth revived the country house, often re-used as residences (although perhaps converted into apartments), a change not foreseen in the earlier post-war period.

Architectural distinction; artistic and decorative achievement; ingenuity of planning and technology; historical and social interest; construction techniques; inter-relationship with fine landscapes: these are but some of the grounds for assigning special interest to country houses. Each century witnessed distinct developments in the evolution of the country house, and the story has not stopped yet.

1.2 The villa

The idea of a rural retreat represented by the country house was maintained and perpetuated on a smaller scale by the villa or detached house, even when it was built in a suburban location. Although by the late nineteenth century the term villa had become somewhat devalued and was now applied to many a middle-class terraced house, it has a long and resonant life, back at least to Pliny the Younger writing in the first century AD. The Romans built vast numbers of such villas across their empire, known either as *villa rustica* or *villa suburbana*. When interest revived in the architecture of antiquity during the fifteenth century in Italy, it was natural that it should focus on the villa as a kind of country house. It later became of particular interest for English architects, influenced as they were by the writings of two Italian architects who illustrated designs for villas, Serlio and Palladio. As wealth increased, so too did the market for houses in the country, not as the centres of great estates, but for relaxation as epitomised by Mereworth Castle, Kent, designed by Colen Campbell (roofed 1723; listed Grade I) and a loose copy of Palladio's Villa Capra.

The first true English villas in the Italian sense were built in the Thames valley around Richmond-on-Thames, Surrey, during the first years of the eighteenth century; an example is Sudbrook Park by James Gibbs of 1726 (listed Grade I). As time went on the country house as rural retreat moved out from the London fringes to be found within reach of larger towns and cities all over England. Improvements in road transport and the railways greatly facilitated this development, as did a growing appetite for retirement and privacy. By the later nineteenth century, such houses had changed in style from the neo-Palladian and later neoclassical styles of the eighteenth century, through the many variations ('Swiss, Grecian, Palladian, Old English, Castellated, Cottage, Modern Italian, Norman, Henry VII-VIII, Elizabethan, Half-Timber and Tuscan', as listed in P F Robinson's *Designs for Ornamental Villas* of 1827), to the vernacular revival of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the years around 1900. However, the purpose of such houses as rural retreats remained constant.

1.3 The Georgian villa

While the suburban villa has roots in the seventeenth century, including Inigo Jones's Queen's House at Greenwich of 1616-19 (completed 1630-35, listed Grade I) and William Talman's designs for a Trianon at Thames Ditton, Surrey, of about 1699, it became increasingly popular under the influence of Palladio, whose *Quattro Libri* was published in translation by Giacomo Leoni in 1716. Equally important was Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* of 1715-25, which illustrated many and various country houses while specifically attacking continental Baroque and encouraging the architecture of Palladio and Inigo Jones. Campbell, indeed, was one of the main movers in villa design with a series of relatively small country houses, all variations of Palladian, or more rarely Serlian, prototypes. Renewed interest in classical precedents led to the study of Roman houses (Robert Castell's *The Villas of the Ancients Illustrated* was published in 1728). Palladian (more strictly neo-Palladian) villas were

compact in form and relatively modest in size, set within private grounds, and often containing very fine interiors. Such houses were built in increasing numbers from the 1740s. Robert Taylor's Barlaston Hall in Staffordshire of 1756-58, or his Asgill House by the river at Richmond-upon-Thames of 1761-4 (both listed Grade I), are neither very large but are carefully proportioned on all sides, and beautifully represent a later generation of neo-Palladian villa, which became the ideal for compact suburban detached villas and proliferated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Distinctive features like canted bays or broad eaves, and ingeniously planned interiors laid out around a top-lit central staircase were to recur frequently thereafter. Eighteenth-century suburban houses were normally built of brick or local stone with tiled roof coverings, but Roman cement was patented in 1796 and increasingly stuccoes and hydraulic

limes were applied as a facing, often over poor quality brick or rubble stone and lined to make it resemble fine ashlar as seen in buildings such as the Old Vicarage, West Dean, Sussex of 1833 (listed Grade II). As the housing market expanded from the late eighteenth century onwards so the appetite for substitute materials and mass-produced building components (such as artificial (Coade) stone and iron balconies) increased. In the same period the use of Welsh slate for roof coverings became almost universal, partly because it was well-suited to the wide shallow-pitched roofs that were then fashionable, but principally because canal transport greatly reduced its cost. However, the argument (common ever since) that such materials and practices have produced buildings of lesser significance than those which are unique and bespoke needs to be guarded against in any assessment.



Figure 4
Mentmore House, Buckinghamshire, a conscious attempt on the part of Sir Joseph Paxton to copy the Elizabethan architecture of Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire for the Rothschild family in the

mid-nineteenth century. Built 1852-4 it was one of the earliest houses to have a hot water and central heating system. Listed Grade I.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there was an explosion in the number of architectural pattern books exhibiting designs for villas and cottages. Typical of the type were John Plaw's *Rural Architecture* of 1784, Charles Middleton's *Country Villas* of 1795 and Robert Lugar's *Architectural Sketches in the Grecian, Gothic and Fancy Styles* of 1805. At least 60 such books were published between 1780 and 1840. The designs they contained became steadily more eclectic from the 1820s, and eroded the virtual monopoly of neoclassicism. For example, and as noted above, P F Robinson's *Designs for Ornamental Villas* of 1827 contained designs for villas in the Norman, Gothic, Tudor and Swiss Chalet style, as well as more conventional types. This publishing phenomenon was an indicator of the growth of the architectural profession for whom the writing of these books was a kind of advertising, and of the increasing size and wealth of the middle class which was the intended audience, (and who were the prospective clients). Such houses were being built in ever-growing numbers. Under the influence of Humphry Repton, detached houses enjoyed an ever closer relationship with the garden: French windows permitted easy passage inside and out, and flowerbeds, trellises and conservatories came right up to the house as seen in the early nineteenth-century at Denham Mount, Buckinghamshire, completed in 1823 from designs by Robert Lugar (listed Grade II). House and garden were increasingly inseparable.

1.4 Early nineteenth-century picturesque villas

The Regency villa emerged from two directions. Country houses grew smaller and less complex as they became more a retreat from urban rural life than the centre of a working agricultural estate; likewise business and professional families in the cities eschewed the cramped and unhealthy conditions of a terraced house for a detached house in its own grounds, set (thanks to transport improvements) within easy reach of town.

The smaller detached house is a peculiarly English model and was expressed in a variety of

styles. Although the Georgian love of classical styles – Greek and Roman – survived well into the Victorian period (and were the ones best understood by builders), the first half of the nineteenth century saw Italianate or picturesque Gothic villas, while the vernacular cottage style became increasingly popular. This was encouraged by Nash's rural group of cottages at Blaise Hamlet on the outskirts of Bristol (1810-12), variously listed Grade I, and Park Village West, detached houses in Italianate and Gothic styles disposed at varying angles along a horseshoe-shaped road built in the 1820s near Regent's Park in London (variously listed Grades I and II); the road, houses, gardens, trees and low garden walls and railings combined to make an informal, rural ensemble on the edge of town, pastoral and romantic in its inspiration, picturesque in effect.

Other examples of picturesque groups of villas built from the 1830s in a range of styles survive in many expanding towns and cities such as Liverpool (Everton Ridge, Allerton, Wavertree and Fairfield). Similarly, Bath returned to the forefront of architectural fashion as Henry Goodridge designed various Italianate houses around the fringes of the city in the 1820s and 1830s. Amon Henry Wilds designed in an Italianate style in Brighton, with the semi-detached villas of Montpelier Villas and the quasi-detached houses of Park Crescent (both 1840s and listed Grade II), whilst Cheltenham has further examples from the 1830s and 1840s such as Fauconberg Villas of circa 1847 by Samuel Onley (listed Grade II) and the Pittville estate. Tunbridge Wells also enjoys estates of villas, moving from the picturesque Regency classicism of Decimus Burton's 1820s Calverley Park (mostly listed Grade II*), through later Italianate styles to the Gothic of the 1870s. Seaside and spa towns were ideal locations for such houses, which then were emulated across the country – as at Baston Lodge, Hastings, of 1850 (listed Grade II), a version by Burton of his Calverley Villas for a friend – albeit in brick.

The principles of picturesque design and layout were taken up by architects and builders directly from published collections such as J B Papworth's *Rural Residences* (1818), Charles Parker's *Villa*

Rustica (1832) and J C Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833). Loudon's publication included numerous designs for cottages and small houses and provided a pattern book for suburban and country builders for many years. T F Hunt published *Exemplars of Tudor Architecture Adapted to Modern Habitations* in 1830; Richard Brown's *Domestic Architecture*, published in 1842, featured designs for houses in a range of particularly exotic styles such as Burmese, Egyptian, Venetian, Moorish Spanish and 'Plantagenet Castle, Edward III style'. Not surprisingly, these styles proved too costly for the average speculative builder, and the more common Italianate and neo-Gothic villas are the main legacy from the first half of the nineteenth century. These houses range from the innovative and opulent, to the derivative and modest, but all possess merit as reminders of a fascinating chapter in the story of architectural taste.

The move away from classical prototypes freed up planning. So-called cottage designs stressed an informality of lay-out which led to asymmetrical designs, derived from an 'inside-out' approach that placed internal room use over formal symmetry to determine the look of the elevations. Later, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, architects like A W N Pugin and Philip Webb became identified with this modern approach to house design, but its origins lay in the picturesque movement. A clear hierarchy took shape within the house, with the principal reception rooms and formal circulation spaces being accorded greater attention to architectural effect than is generally found in more private upper floors and service areas. This period also saw the rise of the holiday house: the picturesquely sited place of retirement and pleasure, embodied most impressively by Endsleigh Cottage, Devon (listed Grade I), built in 1810 for the 6th Duke of Bedford as a fishing retreat to the designs of Sir Jeffry Wyattville. The seaside, or marine, villa emerged as a distinct sort of house at this time too: at resorts like Sidmouth, Devon, outward prospects were important elements of their appeal, connecting the house with its surrounds and rewarding the observer with views of land, sea and sky.

The substantial villas and detached houses of the Victorian period were the homes of self-made men of considerable wealth – though derided by the landed as the 'nouveaux riches' – and range from Italianate villas such as Oakbrook, in Fulwood, Sheffield (Fig 5), of 1855 for the wealthy steel magnate Mark Firth to Spring Hill, a modest Gothic Revival detached house on Cumberland Road, Leeds, of 1846 for the share-broker W H Smith. Both are listed Grade II. The internal layouts of such buildings varied considerably. The most prominent spaces tend to be the principal reception rooms, often designed with inter-connection in mind to create larger spaces for entertaining, and the stair halls. Larger houses increasingly reflected the different spheres of class and gender, and a greater emphasis on leisure, with separate parlours, morning rooms for women and smoking and/or billiard rooms for men. Conservatories provided links between house and garden. The rigorously segregated servants' quarters included increasingly specialised pantries, larders, and special kitchens. Purpose-built bathrooms were still unusual, although sanitary technology developed rapidly at this time, with sinks, baths and even showers installed in the corners of bedrooms and dressing rooms.

1.5 Victorian villas and detached houses

As something of the country house ideal became attainable for the aspiring middle classes, the villa set the pattern for the suburban house – detached or semi-detached – of the Victorian, Edwardian and interwar periods. New architectural styles continued to be used by architects to keep one step ahead of the general builder and the pattern-book, but the prevailing orthodoxy from the mid-nineteenth century onwards became an eclectic historicism where house styles ranged from the sophisticated re-interpretations of previous established styles to a desperate search for the novel and the bizarre in the name of fashion. All give an insight into the bitterness of what critics have termed the 'battle of the styles' as fought in the trenches of domestic architecture.



Figure 5
Grand mansions, such as Oakbrook House, Sheffield, designed for the steel magnate Mark Firth about

1855, ably demonstrates the wealth of the Victorian nouveaux riche. Listed Grade II.

1.6 Materials

Stucco fell out of favour in the mid-nineteenth century to be replaced by more ‘honest’ facing materials, albeit ones increasingly manufactured on an industrial scale and distributed nationally by rail. Good quality rubbed and moulded bricks were used in higher status houses, with bricks laid to form chevron, diaper and polychromatic patterns. Different coloured and sometimes sized bricks were commonly used in string courses and window arches, and walling in bricks of uneven size and profile could be enhanced by using specific pointing techniques such as ‘tuck’ and ‘penny struck’ pointing. Decorative wrought and cast iron adorned the exterior on verandas, gates, and railings. From the mid-nineteenth century, industrial techniques enabled decoration to be realised more cheaply (much to John Ruskin’s distaste). Plaster or composite stone and

cement were employed in sills, lintels, window arches and porches: Gothic variants could be enriched with runs of nail-head, dogtooth, ballflower or fleuron moulding, and column capitals featured flora and foliage, animals or human faces. Roofs were still generally of Welsh slate, but from the 1870s clay tiles began to be produced competitively, including terracotta ridge tiles with wrought iron and cast iron for ornamental finials and cresting. Barge boards framing gable ends were cut and carved in timber in a variety of patterns. Stone, brick or timber bay windows were adapted to fit the smallest of front parlours, sometimes with cast iron colonnettes framing plate glass sash windows. Wooden ‘horns’ at the sides of the principal horizontal bar of the sash came into widespread use from about 1840 to support larger and heavier pieces of glass and can be a useful dateable feature. Such varied materials are among the delights of much of

the housing of this date and the intact survival of such details might be sufficient to influence the listability of a house where a good level of architectural quality is also present.

1.7 Houses for the clergy

In the later eighteenth century many existing parsonages (the very name conjuring up Parson Woodforde's *Diary* and the excesses and failings of the Georgian church) were old, incommodious, and sometimes strongly vernacular in character. Especially where livings were wealthy, these were sometimes replaced in the Regency period by detached houses of polite character. Far more rectories and vicarages were rebuilt in the 1840s and later under the influence of the reforming Oxford Movement, which placed great emphasis on the dignity of worship and of the clergy. These, typically with gothic detailing inside and out, were designed not only to provide living accommodation of a suitable standard for someone who, with the squire, provided parishioners with a moral and theological figurehead, but also a place of work. Examples include those by William Butterfield at Coalpit Heath, Gloucestershire (listed Grade II*) and Baldersby St. James, North Yorkshire (listed Grade II*). Most, like their predecessors, stood close to the church, but in some wealthy livings the opportunity was taken to build on a new and more private site. In such cases the incumbent's new house was typically a generous detached house set in pleasure grounds and serviced by a coach house, stables, and sometimes a walled garden, producing a country estate in miniature. Wherever their location, such houses were normally orientated so that visitors approaching up the drive were met by an imposing façade. Those who were allowed entry on business would probably gain access only to a study immediately beyond the front door. Otherwise the planning and decoration of these houses resembled those of the laity. Roman Catholic presbyteries tend to be different in character, especially internally, as they were designed to accommodate several priests and a housekeeper, while nonconformist manses were generally architecturally modest.

The grouping of these houses for the clergy with a listed church or chapel (and in some cases a meeting hall or school in addition) can be an important factor in considering their designation.

1.8 Suburban houses

A suburb (from the Latin, for 'below the town') is an area of built development adjacent to a town. Many medieval towns developed suburbs, usually around the main access points (or gates where they were walled), comprising a mix of commercial, industrial and domestic premises, and in early modern times they started to acquire the identity that defines them to this day: that of being near to the amenities and activities of the town, yet of being set in calmer, greener settings where the qualities of the countryside had not altogether vanished.

The question of definitions is a complex one. A suburban house can be a large isolated building on the edge of a town, or part of a residential development. Although there are a few houses that may be defined as suburban dating from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, built along principal roads or in satellite villages, suburban development as we know it today did not begin until the early years of the nineteenth century, and was greatly accelerated by the growth of the railway and tram network. The Garden City Association, later the Town and Country Planning Association, was founded in 1899 and brought together leading theorists and planners of the time, leading not only to the first garden city at Letchworth (Hertfordshire) but to garden suburbs inspired by the layouts of its residential areas. Thus 'suburban' means both individual houses some distance from towns, and areas of what have often been considered, rather derogatively, to be unrelieved stretches of mass housing.

The early nineteenth-century suburban villa, especially in its later semi-detached form, had a huge impact on the subsequent shape of English housing. The suburb, with its smaller individual houses, took the place of the blocks

of flats of continental cities (and Scotland) and thus created the lower-density appearance of so much of England's townscape. The smaller English house of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was highly regarded by foreign observers such as Herman Muthesius whose 1904-5 publication *Das Englische Haus* remains one of the best introductions to the importance of English domestic architecture of this period. Notably it placed as much emphasis on architectural design as it does on planning, new technology and setting.

Suburban building – in the sense of the term as defined above – was initially a London phenomenon, satisfying the requirement of courtiers and wealthy merchants to have a residence convenient for the Court or for the conduct of business but removed from the stresses of the city. Since Roman times, a value has been placed on the positive virtues of retreat, on the attractions of rural life, and on the restorative properties of fresh air, space, views and calm. During the eighteenth century, extensive migration from rural to urban areas took place: London always exerted a singular pull, and relied on huge internal migration to replace losses from its grim mortality rates. Other towns, across the country, became heavily overcrowded and unhealthy by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, thanks to the demographic impact of enclosure, rural upheaval and industrialisation. Increasing pressure on urban centres made the desirability of new residential quarters ever greater, something that became possible as new roads and railways opened up the nearby countryside. Consequently as poor people migrated inwards, so the more affluent moved from the centres of towns to their margins.

Early suburban developments were small-scale and piecemeal and usually lay outside the jurisdiction of urban Building Acts. Their survival rate is patchy. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, suburban houses for the middle classes were built in increasing numbers, the majority designed by speculative builders rather than by architects. Landowners began to realise the increased value of land for

building development, especially in picturesque and tranquil areas, and comprehensive housing speculation grew dramatically. Spurred on by an expanding railway network, the process was by the 1860s being described in the building press as a 'building mania'. In areas of lower value, the worker could at last live beyond walking distance of the place of work, and another variant of suburban development emerged. Public transport gradually opened up the suburbs to all but the poorest workers. In London, four million people were housed in the inner and outer suburbs between 1841 and 1901. Other industrial towns expanded similarly: as Liverpool grew to become the nation's second largest port, so its population tripled during the nineteenth century; Manchester showed a similar rate of growth. Annual house-building numbers peaked in 1876, 1898 and 1903.

1.9 The seventeenth-century suburb

The English Civil Wars demonstrated the continuing relevance of fortified towns, but generally this century witnessed a loosening of the circumscribed urban form and the rapid expansion of settlements outside older walls. Exceptions can be found in many places, but little that can properly be described as consciously suburban development was built before the Restoration in 1660. London is a special case because of its size, prominence and crowded nature: from the early modern period onwards, many substantial dwellings were erected in a ring beyond the outskirts of the capital by courtiers and prosperous merchants who were able to afford residences removed from the town: the great house of Osterley (London Borough of Hounslow; listed Grade I) began as a retreat in sylvan Middlesex for the noted financier Sir Thomas Gresham in the mid 1570s. Certain satellite villages acquired a reputation – often because of natural amenities, such as setting, air, natural springs, as well as transport links – as places of retirement quite early on, such as Hampstead and Hackney in north London. Urban forms were transplanted and adapted: for instance, the three pairs of large semi-detached

houses, 1-6 The Grove (Listed Grade II*), built about 1688 as a speculation by a City merchant, William Blake, in Highgate, which was another of the more prosperous satellite villages. Such houses were substantial and set back from the street behind gardens, but clearly followed urban forms in their planning and general arrangement.

1.10 The eighteenth-century suburb

As London's commercial wealth increased, and as the ideal of retreat became ever more desirable, more suburban seats were built in the countryside round the capital. Some were conspicuous displays of wealth, hardly distinguishable from country houses in form and character, such as the vast and imposing Wanstead House (London Borough of Redbridge; begun 1715, now demolished). In London's satellite villages (and to a lesser extent elsewhere) there was a steady increase in the number of houses following urban forms, most commonly the semi-uniform terrace – Maids of Honour Row on Richmond Green (London Borough of Richmond upon Thames), of about 1720 (listed Grade I), and Church Row in Hampstead (London Borough of Camden) built between 1710 and 1730 (variously listed at Grades II and II*) are prime examples. Similar houses were built along the major roads leading to the capital and can sometimes be traced through relic survivals of garden structures as well as through maps and boundaries.

The development of London through the eighteenth century is a special case: very few places were able to attract this kind of development, but early commentators like Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe make it clear that other expanding towns across the country were being graced with houses of substance around the peripheries, as prosperity and mercantile expectations grew: Bristol, Bath and Epsom, for instance, have or had numbers of sizeable houses which are entirely characteristic of this kind of development.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the building of the new turnpike roads set off a fresh bout of linear suburban development. In London this

can best be seen in Kennington, Lambeth and Southwark along the new main roads leading south from the Thames, where numbers of large semi-detached houses and terraces built in yellow London stock brick still survive. Road improvements elsewhere in the country produced similar developments, often on the edge of quite minor towns. Many of the new urban-style houses were substantial and intended for prosperous occupants who could afford to keep a horse and carriage, often in a detached coach house or stable building. Developments on a more modest scale sometimes survive. These smaller houses often exhibit a mixture of urban and rural vernacular forms in their plans and fittings: they have often passed unnoticed and are now quite rare, so should therefore be carefully considered for designation (even if incomplete) in case they retain interesting evidence of early use (such as the presence of workshops or multiple occupancy) in their fabric.

1.11 The rise of the semi-detached house

At Gloucester Gate, part of John Nash's early nineteenth-century developments at Regent's Park, what appeared to be a whole villa from the outside was vertically subdivided to form the quintessential English suburban domestic home, the semi-detached house. This had evolved as a suburban building type during the eighteenth century. Not as cheap to build as terraced houses, the semi was still an economical form of house, with a party wall, stacks and pitched roof shared by two dwellings. Versatile and adaptable, especially when built close together to line a street, with small front gardens and side passage access to the rear garden, the 'semi' had attained considerable architectural presence in developments such as the Paragon, Blackheath (London Borough of Lewisham, 1794-1807 by Michael Searles; listed Grade I), where a curved row of semis was linked by low colonnades to produce an effect of considerable grandeur. The type was enthusiastically taken up from the 1830s by the growing numbers of speculating developers building new suburbs around London and other cities. Interesting early examples can

also be found in fashionable places such as Cheltenham, Brighton and Bristol (and see Fig 1).

1.12 The mid nineteenth-century detached and semi-detached house (1850-70)

From the 1850s onwards, good quality substantial detached villas designed by established local architects proliferated on villa estates located on the edge of flourishing cities; stylistically they became increasingly eclectic. They also evolved downwards from being bespoke one-off commissions into the mainstream of speculative residential building. The higher status suburban house built by speculators after 1850 often emulated the Italianate Renaissance style popularised by architects such as Sir Charles Barry, and exemplified by Queen Victoria's rural palace at Osborne on the Isle of Wight (Fig 3; listed Grade I), realised for her in 1845-51 by Prince Albert and the builder-designer Thomas Cubitt, master of the grand London suburb. Suburban villas of this ambitious variety typically featured an irregular composition with towers, segmental pediments above windows, cast iron balconies, rusticated stucco at ground floor level, deep eaves, a shallow pitched roof and stringcourses to delineate floor levels; interiors could be opulent, if standardised, with rich plasterwork, chimneypieces and internal decoration which took advantage of new forms of machine production. More modest suburban houses often exhibited at least some of these motifs.

Equally adaptable was the Gothic Revival style, the details of which could provide a degree of ostentation and variety that many builders and their clients deemed missing from earlier, plainer, Georgian houses. Detached and semi-detached villas in the Gothic style appeared in many builders' pattern books and were characterised by a broken frontage to emphasise individuality and internal lay-out, gable ends (sometimes with decorative bargeboards); small-paned leaded windows with square hood-moulds; arched door openings; decorative chimneystacks; overhanging eaves and, after around 1860, greater use of

polychromatic brickwork which replaced stucco as the preferred facing material. Alongside this essentially decorative adaptation of medieval and Tudor styles was a more full-blooded revival of interest in earlier approaches to house building. Under the influence of architects such as A W N Pugin and William Butterfield, Gothic detail came to be more boldly handled, exploiting the picturesque quality deriving from asymmetrical plan and massing, and made features of the innate qualities of materials, while making references to the domestic architecture of the past. The Gothic Revival may not have had a lasting influence stylistically on house design but, in the houses of A W N Pugin (particularly the Grange at Ramsgate, Kent, of 1843-4, built for his own occupation and listed Grade I), William White, G F Bodley and others, not only was a satisfyingly authentic kind of domestic architecture devised but also a rather freer kind of internal planning.

Housing for the professional classes, such as the large number of vicarages built in the first half of the nineteenth century or the housing for university lecturers and their families (in itself a new innovation) on the St John's College's North Oxford estate from the 1860s provide good exemplars: romantically medieval without and extravagantly decorated within. The house the architect William Burges designed for himself on Melbury Road (London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 1875-81; listed Grade I) provides another, exceptional, example. Such houses were to influence later nineteenth-century house design both in Britain and elsewhere in the world.

1.13 Suburban housing 1870-1900

Most speculative builders of the 1870s and 1880s copied the designs and advice available in publications such as E L Tarbuck's *The Builder's Practical Director* (1855), Robert Kerr's *The Gentleman's House* (1864), and E L Blackburne's *Suburban and Rural Architecture* (1869), the aim of which was 'to obtain as much picturesqueness of outline and play of light and shade as is possible in houses of so small a class'. The Venetian forms of the Gothic espoused by

Ruskin became ever more popular as applied as decoration to housing, and the two-storey bay window, deployed since eighteenth-century Palladianism, became a norm in suburban house design. Popular, too, but surviving less frequently, was what might be called the picturesque Swiss style, with lavish balconies, verandahs and timber-work, often highly ornamental. Some very large houses were built in these styles but they suffered badly when tastes turned against Victorian eclecticism and are now rare survivals.

Many of the smaller speculative-built semi-detached houses adhered to pattern-book models, with a narrow entrance hall, plain staircase, a front parlour with a bay window, and a dining room at the back overlooking the garden, kitchen and scullery. As the building industry became more highly organised in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to meet massive demand, so the plan of the suburban house became more uniform and generally unexceptional. Much such housing

survives, and the identification of the necessary levels of special interest for designation on a national level is sometimes a quest in vain. Areas of such housing, however, can retain clear character and appeal which may warrant their inclusion within a conservation area and identification for local listing.

1.14 Queen Anne and the Domestic Revival

Architecture, particularly in decorative terms, was also influenced by the Aesthetic Movement of the 1870s and 1880s, an artistic reaction against what was seen as the misdirected opulence and extravagance of the High Victorian period, particularly in revolutionising middle-class taste. Taken up by a slightly later generation of architects such as George Devey, W E Nesfield and Richard Norman Shaw in the 1860s and 1870s, houses of the 'Domestic Revival' moved away from historicist and ecclesiastical styles towards



Figure 6
Developing the informality of the Picturesque Movement the 'Queen Anne' Revival, seen here in Richard Norman Shaw's Lowther Lodge, in London's South Kensington (1874-5), delighted in its mastery of

ornamental rubbed, gauged, and moulded brickwork to create a new wilfully asymmetrical style of suburban architecture. Listed Grade II*.

accessible cosiness and homeliness, with leaded windows, small tile-hung or timbered gables placed at different heights and depths, and tall chimneystacks based on examples of vernacular buildings such as farmhouses being studied at first hand from the 1860s – often by young architects taking advantage of the invention of the bicycle to explore the variety of England’s own rural traditions. The vernacular touches of the Domestic Revival had its urban equivalent in the ‘Queen Anne’ style, first seen prominently in Lowther Lodge on Kensington Gore, (London Borough of Westminster) of 1874-5 by Richard Norman Shaw (Fig 6; listed Grade II*). It was a style which, whilst remaining true to the spirit of the Gothic Revival, also looked back to the domestic classicism of the late seventeenth century. Drawing inspiration from a wide range of sources was a prominent aspect of High Victorian culture and design, and has clear parallels in the work of contemporary painters. Good examples of the Domestic Revival style are to be found in the houses at Bedford Park in west London (1876-81), a fore-runner of the garden suburb set out in wide tree-lined streets. Domestic Revival and Queen Anne were both influential styles on developing middle-class suburban estates of the 1880s, 1890s, and beyond, publicised through books such as J J Stevenson’s *House Architecture* (1880) and T G Jackson’s *Modern Gothic Architecture* (1883). The designs of Richard Norman Shaw for Jonathan Carr’s new estate at Bedford Park (London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow) include smaller semi-detached houses in the Queen Anne style in a form which became increasingly popular as suburban expansion continued into the twentieth century (Fig 7). Shaw provided the developer with three different designs from 1878-80; all shared the characteristic of a shallow plan to encourage maximum daylight, rather than the deep plan of the typical Victorian terraced house. Most are listed Grade II.

1.15 The Arts and Crafts Movement

Just as the architecture of the Domestic Revival and the Queen Anne Revival built on the achievements of the Gothic Revival, as well as reacting to its perceived deficiencies, so the next generation of architects, those of the Arts and Crafts Movement, built on the Domestic Revival, directly in the cases of W R Lethaby, E S Prior, Mervyn McCartney, Gerald Horsley and Ernest Newton, who were all in Shaw’s office, and Guy Dawber, Robert Weir Schultz, Ernest Mitchell and, briefly, Edwin Lutyens, who were, amongst others, in that of Ernest George. All admitted as an early source Philip Webb’s rather more rough-hewn and abstract architecture and the plainer and simpler forms of Arts and Crafts house design. One of the few English architectures to have become famous across the world, such houses were often given deliberately mannered, not to say gawky twists, to show honesty in design. The Red House,



Figure 7
One of several semi-detached houses built in Croydon in about 1881 by the builder W H Lascelles employing a newly patented system of dyed concrete panels to simulate seventeenth-century parquetry beloved of the ‘Queen Anne’ Revival. Listed Grade II.



Figure 8

Perhaps more than any other architect Charles Voysey's Edwardian houses, such as 'Holly Mount', Penn,

Buckinghamshire of 1907, provided a model for the houses of inter-war suburbia. Listed Grade II*.

Bexleyheath, Kent, designed by Philip Webb for William Morris in 1859-60 (listed Grade I) remains the touchstone for its development combining informal picturesque planning with honest use of materials – brick is left bare and exposed, timber undecorated, and elements of vernacular classicism, such as sash-windows and modest pilasters, artfully introduced.

The Arts and Crafts Movement, especially in the detached houses of Charles Voysey (Fig 8), and M H Baillie Scott, introduced a romantic English vernacular vision of domestic architecture, characterised by large roofs, sweeping eaves, elongated chimney stacks, roughly rendered walls, and simple country detailing. This was transferred to the semi-detached house which propelled this romantic vision into the interwar period to be copied by builders up and down the land in a mass-produced, pared-down form. Legion as the resulting buildings are, it is nonetheless important to identify the best examples, which demonstrate inventiveness of design and planning, degree of

survival of interiors and inclusion of decorative details (Figs 9-10).

1.16 The twentieth-century detached and semi-detached house

The innovation and opulence in house design which characterised the best houses of the early years of the twentieth century soon gave way to austerity in the years immediately following the First World War, and a phase of gradual assimilation of these approaches in the years thereafter. What was referred to as 'the servant problem', as young women in particular sought employment in the expanding world of shop and office work, led to changes in the planning of houses of large and medium size, and the introduction of labour-saving devices. The construction of country houses reduced significantly, as did the size, scale, and grandeur of those that were built. However, this is not to say that the interwar country house lacks interest



Figure 9 (top)
 Up and down the country the Domestic Revival influenced homes of character based on the work of architects such as Shaw, Nesfield, George Devey, Newton, and Prior. But only rarely do they achieve the quality displayed here at Downleaze, Bristol, by Henry Dare Bryan, about 1892. Listed Grade II.

Figure 10 (above)
 Lodge to Malvern House, Mapperley Road, Nottingham, 1875-6 by the American-born architect Henry Sulley (1845-1940), which forms a group with the main house – a villa with a tower – to form an engaging ensemble that also includes stables. Listed Grade II.

– far from it. Under the auspices of *Country Life* magazine and the ‘Ideal Home’ exhibitions, held annually from 1908, a plethora of publications with titles such as *Houses for Moderate Means* and *The Smaller Country House* gave advice on how to cope with the reduced circumstances faced by many, in much the same way that the pattern-book had dictated taste in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Ideal Home magazine was first published in 1920.

Sir Edwin Lutyens remained active in designing houses both great and small and modified his pre-war preference for a romantic Arts and Crafts vision

to a more elegant revival of Georgian classicism, inspired by England’s greatest architects such as Sir Christopher Wren. Suburban architecture also fell under the spell of the neo-Georgian style (Figs 11-12), emanating from, amongst other sources, the Liverpool School of Architecture under its dynamic head, the architect Charles Reilly, who embraced the wider range of classical motifs offered by the French Beaux-Arts traditions, especially as adapted by the commercial architects of North America. An expanding middle class, the increasing availability of mortgages, and the political promotion of home-ownership for those not looking to council housing all



Figure 11
Emerging out of the return to classicism in the ‘Queen Anne’ Revival of the 1870s, the neo-Georgian Revival achieved increasing dominance in the twentieth

century. Illustrated here is one of a series of holiday homes in St. Winifred’s Road, Bournemouth, designed for Scottish gentry between 1907-14. Listed Grade II.

made for the rise of the owner-occupier and the house-building industry, promoting houses in traditional and moderne styles appealing to all sections of the market. Research continues to develop on appreciating this aspect of the history of twentieth-century housing, but a good introduction to the competing categories of suburban housing remains Osbert Lancaster's satirical book *Pillar to Post* (1938) with its whimsical codification of interwar styles such as 'Stockbroker Tudor', 'Wimbledon Transitional' and 'Bypass Variegated'. Amidst this expanding historicism, however, two styles dominated: neo-Georgian and neo-Tudor.



Figure 12
A well-proportioned and reticent neo-Georgian house of 1915, 'Ridgehanger', Ealing, designed by the then Principal of the Architectural Association, Robert Atkinson. Listed Grade II.

1.17 Neo-Georgian

Following the triumph of John Brydon's vestry hall for Chelsea in 1885-7 (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, listed Grade II*), classicism was often deployed for more monumental building types, such as municipal buildings. An interest in the architecture of Wren and the Baroque and later on in the eighteenth century also affected suburban and country house design by 1900. The Domestic Revival redolent of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the emerging neo-Georgian style became interchangeable as modes of house design in the hands of architects such as Ernest Newton and Walter Cave. Neo-Georgian showed itself in a preference not only for classical motifs but in a more horizontal arrangement than its ancestor, often with wide sweeping roofs, prominent stacks and blocked quoins. Brick was very popular as a material.

This architecture dominated the early twentieth century: modular in format, simple in construction and in its choice of stripped-down motifs from the later varieties of neo-Regency, spare in treatment, and therefore suitable on a large scale for monumental buildings, and on a smaller scale for detached houses in the suburbs such as Ridgehanger, Ealing, by Robert Atkinson of 1915 (listed Grade II, Fig 12) or even social housing such as that built in 1913-14 in Courtenay Square, Lambeth, by Adshead and Ramsey for the Duchy of Cornwall (Grade II). Its friendly formality lent it to formal planning. Neo-Georgian is sometimes regarded as less progressive than the Domestic Revival with its Arts and Crafts Movement credentials, but this can be a misleading view as a house such as Eyewell House, Queen Camel (Somerset; listed Grade II) by Sir Guy Dawber of 1924-5 demonstrates; as a major trend in domestic architecture of the period after 1890, first Domestic Revival houses with neo-Georgian interior touches and then houses in a full-blown neo-Georgian style should be considered very carefully for listing.

1.18 Neo-Tudor

If neo-Georgian came to be used in more formal circumstances, the neo-Tudor had a greater influence on speculative building. Individual houses across England with gables, bay windows and so-called half-timbering are extremely common derivatives of the earlier movements. These appeared first as larger suburban houses and then increasingly during the interwar years as smaller houses such as Sparsholt Manor, Hampshire, by Triggs and Unsworth (1922-3), or St Martha's Priory, Guildford, of 1932 by A C Burlingham (both listed Grade II) and semi-detached houses and flats such as those designed by Ernest Trobridge in and around Kingsbury, (London Borough of Brent; variously listed Grade II). While relatively uniform, the best examples, such as those designed by Blunden Shadbolt,

Sydney Castle and Ernest Trobridge, have considerable verve and are already represented in the lists by examples such as Sheengate, Richmond (London Borough of Richmond) of 1924-5 by Castle. Many of the speculative-built suburban developments of the 1920s and 1930s adopted the planning and architecture of the Garden City Movement and its offshoot, the garden suburb, but sometimes skimmed on the quality of materials, spacious garden plots and tree-lined streets: these are unlikely to warrant listing. However, more characterful or out-of-the-ordinary developments may be worthy of recognition as conservation areas: examples include Homestead Park, Dollis Hill (London Borough of Brent) designed in 1926 by William E Sanders, and the Severne Estate, Hall Green, Birmingham, built in 1933 by H Dare and Sons.



Figure 13
Churchill Court, Sevenoaks, Kent, was built in 1900 but only twenty years later was completely remodelled into this neo-Tudor house by Imrie and Angell.

The servants' staircase is all that remains internally of the original house. Listed Grade II.

2 Specific Considerations

2.1 Date

- **Pre-1700** Recognisable survivors, even when substantially altered, whether individual houses or a group, are likely to be listable.
- **1700 to about 1850** Houses surviving without substantial alteration will probably warrant listing, although some discretion may be necessary for later, more standard designs. The most complete and elaborate houses may be listable in a high grade if they can demonstrate intrinsic merit such as good-quality composition, detailing and a distinctive plan form.
- **about 1850 to 1939** Because of the increase in the number of houses and estates built and which survive, a greater degree of selection will apply, with the threshold for listing becoming higher as they approach the present day.

As well as the date-specific considerations above the following over-arching considerations also need to be considered:

2.2 Selectivity

Country houses, villas, and suburban houses survive in such large numbers that they will need to be carefully assessed for listing against the normal selection criteria: age and rarity, degree of survival, quality of design, materials, craftsmanship, and historic associations. In terms of large-scale country houses, the majority

have already been listed, though areas covered by earlier and less complete lists of the 1970s may contain post-1850 country houses that are unlisted and which may deserve consideration. Such areas may also contain houses which are under-graded, and/or with outbuildings insufficiently identified in list descriptions; many houses were listed without the benefit of internal inspection which may reveal further claims to special interest. Sheer expense never vouchsafed architectural interest or design quality, but such houses could be innovative in terms of style, planning, technology or have other historic interest. As set out in government guidance, there is a rising threshold for listing: the more modern the building, the stronger the claims to special interest must be.

2.3 Aesthetic judgment

Most houses which pre-date 1850 that are unaltered and of interest will be listable. Because much housing from the middle years of the nineteenth century became more standardised and because there is so much of it, critical faculties can sometimes be numbed: but this is just where greater judgment is required. It is thus important to give the assessment of individual buildings particular care and attention. Quality of elevational design, interest of planning, quality and survival of decorative elements, innovation rather than imitation: these considerations will be important. Some excellent designs, especially in the decades to either side of 1900, are subtle and undemonstrative and easily overlooked; equally, some types of design sought mannered

or otherwise distinctive design solutions; what might initially appear as infelicities should not automatically be dismissed as poor design: efforts should be made to understand the client's and designer's intentions. Expense is no indication of architectural quality. Similarly the notion that in the modern period only Modernist progressive styles were favoured should be tempered by the range and quality of traditional and historicist styles. While celebrated architects were sometimes involved, elsewhere it is the work of local architects, and their interpretation of nationally important styles and modes of building, that is often of great interest. Degree of survival will not in itself be sufficient. However, the intact survival of noteworthy decorative features, both inside and out, can sometimes justify listing or sway the balance in otherwise marginal examples.

2.4 Technology

Particularly important in the case of houses belonging to industrialists and improvers, Victorian and Edwardian houses often adopted the latest technology. Electric generators appeared in the latter years of the nineteenth century; cars replaced carriages or were at least used alongside them; telephones were installed; and laundries, kitchens, bathrooms and other rooms were modernised. Intact and early examples of interesting technological improvements may add to a building's special interest.

2.5 Alteration

Many houses undergo change, and this need not rule out listability: indeed, it can sometimes add to the special interest. Cases will need to be assessed on an individual, case by case, basis. The most important determinant is whether changes have been positive and contributory, or negative and harmful. Alteration to secondary areas can more easily be overlooked than the loss of major features.

2.6 Subsidiary features

Urban houses of the more polite or high-status type, especially but not exclusively terraced houses, were often enclosed at the front by railings on a low wall enclosing a basement well or 'area', whilst in some parts of the country there was a strong tradition of building to the back of the pavement. Features that can contribute to special interest include original walls; stone steps; storage vaults beneath the pavement; and ironwork including railings, gates, overthrows, lamp holders and boot scrapers.

2.7 Boundary walls

The definition of property boundaries by walls, hedges, railings (for which see [Street Furniture](#)) and fences is associated with structures of most kinds. Walls should be treated as a subsidiary listed feature only where they share the same postal address as the principal listed building; if they do not (for example, where a property has been subdivided) they should be listed separately. In planning law, where walls are attached to, or fall within the curtilage of a listed building, they have statutory protection regardless of their merit. The decision as to whether a building or structure is within the curtilage of a listed building rests with the local authority.

To be listed in their own right, or as a subsidiary feature, they should have intrinsic claims to special interest. The more recent the wall, the higher the expectation will be that the wall in question will possess design or construction interest; this particularly applies from 1850 onwards. Quality of brickwork, degree of survival, the inclusion of notable features (such as gates and gate piers of note, or adjoining mounting blocks) will all be relevant considerations. So will rarity: for instance, a curving crinkle-crinkle wall. The use of local materials can sometimes give a wall special interest, or add to it. A wall may be deemed to have group value by virtue of its close association with a listed building or a scheduled monument.

2.8 Integrated assessments

Particularly at larger country house it is essential to assess house, stables, garden and other ancillary buildings together to ensure that a full appraisal is made of the ensemble and provide clarity as to where special interest resides. Some plainer outbuildings and structures may have an important relationship with the principal house and should be identified as possessing group value. Designed landscapes may warrant designation in their own right, and more outlying garden buildings may also be listable (see the selection guide [Garden and Park Structures](#)).

2.9 Regional variation

The design stamp of a local builder or architect, and of peculiarly local vernacular forms or materials, should be represented on the List. Local distinctiveness can contribute a great deal to the character and interest of a house.

2.10 Planned settlements and estates

Like town housing, suburban (and occasionally rural) developments can possess special interest because of their planning: their layout, their relationship with open spaces and roads, the overall architectural character and its relationship to the site they occupy. Some of the most interesting examples of suburban housing may be found in planned or partly planned developments of which the spa towns of Cheltenham and Leamington, and model villages such as Blaise Hamlet on the edge of Bristol and Milton Abbas in Dorset, are justly celebrated. However, less obviously planned developments can be found in such places as Bickley and Chislehurst in Kent, at Four Oaks in Sutton Coldfield in the West Midlands, at Edgbaston in Birmingham, and later model developments such as Bedford Park, Letchworth (Hertfordshire), and New Earswick outside York.. While many houses within these developments will be of special interest in their own right, it is important to assess them in context: listing

should be inclusive where the quality of the whole is high and forms of area designation (above all conservation areas) may also be appropriate. Similarly, houses on country estates often possess particular interest as a result of landlords seeking to improve the accommodation of tenantry, as encountered at Southill (Bedfordshire) on the former Whitbread estate.

2.11 Under-representation on the list

Many lists of the 1970s and 1980s are likely to omit suburban houses, particularly those post-dating 1870, and some which have special interest will still await discovery, even from earlier periods. Greater appreciation of the quality of twentieth-century suburban housing, for example, warrants a fresh assessment of such buildings.

2.12 Development pressures

Larger suburban houses in particular have recently been subject to enormous pressures including both conversion (into flats or offices), and that of new development in the gardens or grounds, sometimes calling for the demolition of the original house in pursuit of higher density development. The latter is particularly significant because, where they remain substantially intact, suburban houses not only show great architectural ingenuity and invention in style, materials, and plan form, they were often carefully designed in relation to their garden, street layout and neighbouring plots. Setting may be an important factor in assessing their special interest. There is undeniable pressure on the larger detached house, set in its own grounds: while designation must always be dispassionate, even in the face of proposed demolition, identifying those examples which possess special interest is all the more important. Area assessment can assist in identifying significant buildings, and local designation may be a valid response where national designation is not warranted.

2.13 Grading

Listing in the higher grades may be appropriate when architectural interest of a particularly high order is present. Early and influential examples of developments in domestic architecture may qualify, as may component parts of particularly significant ensembles and exceptionally intact examples of clear note. Outstanding decorative elements may sometimes warrant consideration for a higher grade too: the survival of interesting interiors or early wall paintings, for instance, may be relevant in this regard. Historic associations (see below) may occasionally have an impact too.

2.14 Historic associations

Well-documented historic associations of national importance may increase the case for listing but normally a building should be of some architectural merit in itself or it should be preserved in a form that directly illustrates and confirms its historic associations. In designating the residences of famous persons, a view needs to be reached which balances their historical significance with the interest of the house: degree of survival, and the legibility of the connection between occupant and house, will mainly determine List-worthiness and grading. Sometimes architectural modesty can reveal considerable historical interest (for instance, as in the case of the Chartist settlements of the 1840s). Cases must be judged on individual merits.

2.15 Extent of listing

Amendment to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides two potential ways to be more precise about what is listed.

The empowerments, found in section 1 (5A) (a) and (b) of the 1990 Act, allow the List entry to say definitively whether attached or curtilage structures are protected; and/or to exclude from the listing specified objects fixed to the building, features or parts of the structure. These changes do not apply retrospectively, but New listings and substantial amendments from 2013 will provide this clarification when appropriate.

Clarification on the extent of listing for older lists may be obtained through the Local Planning Authority or through the Historic England's Enhanced Advisory Service, see www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/EAS.

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