

The image is a composite background for a guide. It features a close-up of a stone-roofed building with a decorative finial in the foreground. In the background, there is a modern white building with a balcony and a view of a coastal landscape with cliffs and a green hill. The sky is overcast.

Lyme Regis Building and Environment Guide

The Lyme Regis Society

Produced by the Lyme Regis Society

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Introduction

Aim

This guide updates our 1930's pamphlet that helped owners and occupiers of heritage buildings to work with builders and architects to construct and repair buildings within Lyme Regis sympathetically in line with the character and setting of the local surrounds.

The guide not only covers our old and listed buildings but gives an insight into managing the buildings that have developed in the Lyme area over the years

Purpose

This booklet provides information on how to access a wealth of guidance, support and practical help and offers advice to residents, owners, planners, architects and builders to maintain, enhance and develop the character and setting of Lyme Regis.

Scope

The guide applies to Lyme Regis and its surrounds: buildings, spaces, street scenes such as lampposts and signage, vistas and coastline, public spaces, green spaces and areas of woodland and trees.

'*The Lyme Regis Society Building and Environment Guide*' is available free of charge on-line at <https://www.lymeregissociety.org.uk/>. Using the on-line version allows you to click through to any website links for further information.

Brief History of the Development of Lyme Regis

Lyme Regis has developed considerably since the town was mentioned in the Domesday Book. During the last five hundred years people have remodelled their buildings or pulled them down and built anew. Their successors have then remodelled again or demolished and built newly designed properties. The result is that over the years the town of Lyme Regis reflects many different buildings styles in various areas within the town boundaries.

In general it can be assumed that most of the

buildings within the Conservation Area are of heritage interest. Similarly all listed buildings will be of heritage interest. In addition there are many other buildings or structures which are not listed, scheduled or within the Conservation Area which are of heritage, historical or architectural interest to people who live in or visit the town:

The Conservation Area. This was last updated in 2010. All buildings within the Conservation Area require planning permission for external work unless it is repair work (see Appendix 1 for the Conservation Area map).

Listed buildings. There are over two hundred listed buildings in Lyme Regis; such as Eagle House in Sherborne Lane which dates from 743 AD. We have a mix of primarily Grade II listed houses in our older buildings with one Grade I building, St. Michael's Parish Church in Church Street. All listed buildings require planning permission and Listed Building Consent for internal and external work unless it's 'like for like' repair work (see Appendix 2 for a link to the British Listed Buildings website).

The 18th/early 19th Century saw an expansion of the town buildings, some were given new facades and many new buildings were built along Pound Street and in the Sidmouth Road, for example Belmont House built in 1784 and Holme Cleve (now Gatesfield) built in the early years of the 19th Century.

19th Century expansion - the town's population expanded more rapidly and many more tourists visited the area. This led to new buildings expansion and infilling gaps with Victorian houses for example properties along Broad Street and Marine Parade.

From the mid - 16th Century onwards there was constant rebuilding either as residents became more affluent, where slums were replaced or houses with few modern facilities were rebuilt to a better standard such as:

- 1900 The row of bay windows houses at the top of Sherborne Lane
- 1950 Some more functionally built cottages of the opposite side of Sherborne Lane

New build houses, as the town expanded more modern homes were built on available land:

- 1950s Anning Road estate – primarily social housing

- 1970s Fairfield Park
- 1990/00s Queens Walk and Henry's Way mixed social and private residences
- 2015 Woodberry Down – private residential development by Bloor Homes
- 2017 Timber Hill – social housing

Future Development



Left - Langmoor Gardens

Below - Anning Road house

Bottom - Leat 90s houses

Future development of Lyme Regis is extremely limited due to the town's position between the coast and the surrounding 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', and in addition the problems with drainage and instability issues with any currently available building land. The stability of the sub-soils is always monitored and considered by the Town Council Planning Committee who take into account the impact of new or extension developments on existing land and buildings.

Bloor Homes currently own two parcels of land around the Talbot Road area which have not been developed so far.

The instability of the coastline, although mitigated by sea defences and strengthening of vulnerable areas still means that a constant watch on land movement is maintained.

Open spaces are a valuable asset in Lyme Regis but can also be good indicator of ground movement, Dorset Council and the Town Council alleviates landslip by maintaining good drainage and ensuring that any movement is monitored and addressed. For example in the Langmoor Gardens cracks in the pathways are monitored to see that they are not expanding to a point where remedial action is necessary.



Lyme Regis' Environment

Public Spaces

Lyme Regis is in an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB) and is part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. The National Trust protects many undeveloped stretches of the UK's coastline. Natural England has a key role in protecting our heritage coast in line with current planning regulations, for example, ensuring that rooflines are consistent when any planning applications are made so that vista does not change dramatically or introduce elements that are completely out of character with their setting.

Natural England is working on the 'England Coast Path' which will create a new national trail around the entire coast of England.

The Town Council look after a range of public spaces and these are managed with a view to keeping them in harmony with our town. The Town Council have recently started a re-wilding project, where areas are given over to wild flower planting and grass seeding. The Town Council is also introducing more trees into town public spaces including Anning Road Playing Fields.

Local Green Spaces

We are fortunate to have many Designated Green Spaces as part of the Local Green Space Designation Criteria (LGSDC) which protects identified Local Green Spaces (LGS) in a similar way to the Green Belt. There are four criteria to make an area eligible to become a LGS:

1. Reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
2. Demonstrably special to a local community.
3. Local in character, not an extensive tract of land.
4. Land already designated e.g. Green Belt land.

Trees

Trees and hedges are a key element of our countryside, and they also have a major part to play in more urban areas.

Trees and hedges in private gardens, parks and other open spaces, or lining the sides of our streets and rivers are of great importance. Trees provide valuable habitats for wildlife, improve the air we breathe, and help to conserve energy in nearby buildings.

Trees may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or other legal procedures to make sure that they are not lost or damaged needlessly. Dorset Council may issue a TPO for specific trees. Anyone can suggest that a tree is considered for TPO status to Dorset Council. Dead trees are exempt from TPOs.

TPOs prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the local authority's



Trees in the Langmoor Gardens

consent. The maximum penalty for carrying out works to TPO trees without consent is £20,000 (see Appendix 2).

Natural England advise on aspects of Ancient Woodland and Ancient Trees.

World Heritage Site Status

Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site: The Jurassic Coast including Lyme Regis is also part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

The Jurassic Coast covers 95 miles of truly stunning coastline from East Devon to Dorset, with rocks recording 185 million years of the Earth's history and highlighting three major periods on our history: The Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous.

Lyme Regis is renowned as a centre of excellence in fossil studies and remarkable fossil discoveries.



The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site

IMAGE © JURASSIC COAST TRUST

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

The Dorset AONB



MAP DATA © 2019 GOOGLE

What to consider when planning repairs / extensions / changes...

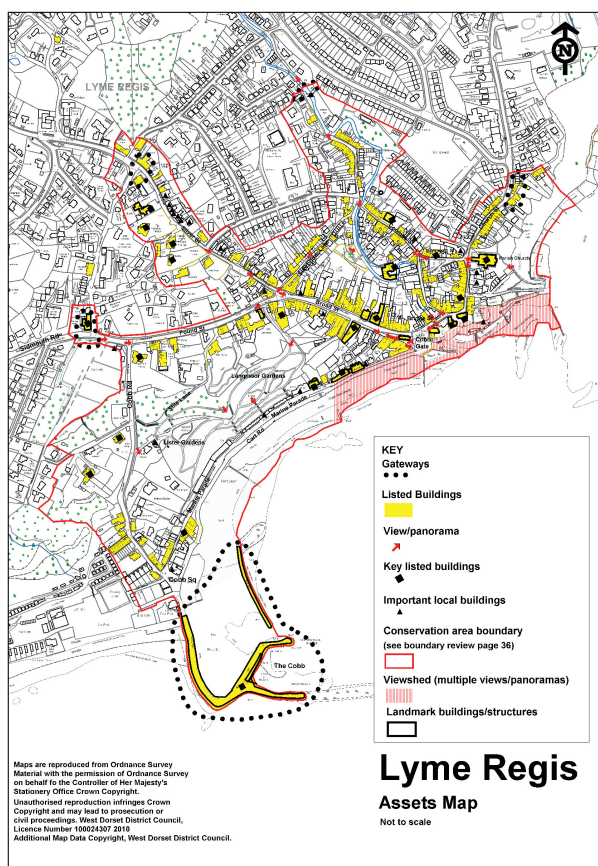
Is your home listed?

The designation regime is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (1).

- Grade I listing means that both any internal and external changes to the fabric of the building require listed building consent before any work starts.
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest. 5.8% of listed buildings are Grade II*.
- Grade II These buildings are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them. A Grade II listing covers the outside of your building primarily although some internal features may also be included e.g. a fireplace or beams.

Are you in a Conservation Area?

Lyme Regis has quite an extensive Conservation Area see below, there is a larger version at Appendix 1. This is also available on line – see Appendix 2 for a website link.



COURTESY OF DORSET COUNCIL

Do you need a 'Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Works'?

There are occasions when it is useful to have formal confirmation that listed building consent is not required for works proposed to a listed building. Since 2014 the government has introduced a more formal procedure referred to as a 'Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Works' (CLPW) to a Listed Building which lasts for ten years. Application for a CLPW is made under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Important to note that a CLPW is part of the listed building consent regime. Owners of heritage buildings should not confuse a CLPW with a 'Lawful Development Certificate' which relates to the need for planning permission. If you want to be certain that the existing use of a building is lawful for planning purposes or that your proposal does not require planning permission, you can apply for a 'Lawful Development Certificate' (LDC). It is not compulsory to have an LDC but there may be times when you need one to confirm that the use, operation or activity named in it is lawful for planning control purposes (see Appendix 2).

Do you need 'Listed Building Consent' ?

If your building is listed the answer is 'Yes', consent is required for demolition of a listed building and any alterations which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Here are just a few examples of where you need to apply for Listed Building Consent:

- replacement or alterations of architectural components e.g. windows, doors and structural timbers
- removal or application of internal plaster, external render, claddings or linings
- extensive re-pointing or cleaning of external walls, or painting external walls a different colour
- damp proofing

- re-roofing such as thatching or changing the roofing material
- attaching signage, external lighting, satellite dishes or burglar alarm boxes
- alteration of fireplaces and chimney stacks or the insertion of flues or vents.

Preserve what you have

You should also be aware that more recent builds often incorporate older buildings, so if your building includes a well, an ancient or old wall that was part of a previous dwelling then you should take care to protect these older and not necessarily listed parts of your home. Many features can add considerable value to your house and preserving these items will be an added selling point which may be of benefit in the future.

External Changes

If you have a listed building, or one in the Conservation Area, the Conservation Officer is usually your first port of call for advice and discussion on any changes or improvements that you wish to make, for example renewing rotten wooden windows or making any changes to the structure such as putting in additional ventilation to a bathroom or renewing external render. This might require a fee to be paid before an officer will visit to provide advice. The Lyme Regis Society can also help with initial informal discussions and options.

Internal Changes

These should be fit for purpose and will need to comply with building regulations e.g. putting an extra bedroom into a loft space requires a certain head height and access via properly constructed staircase etc. These should also be practical and comfortable for today's modern world. Making changes designed to be in harmony with the existing building will be a positive contribution to the look and feel of your home.

National Planning Policy Framework

The revised National Planning Policy Framework was updated on 19th February 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced (see Appendix 2 for the website link).

The Planning Process

Before you make any changes to your building it's worth considering whether you need planning approval/permission to carry out the work.

Some work can be included in 'permitted development' however you still need to comply with building regulations but don't have to apply for planning approval.

Some changes need the input of the Conservation Officer to approve methods of changing or making alterations to a listed building or those in the Conservation Area.

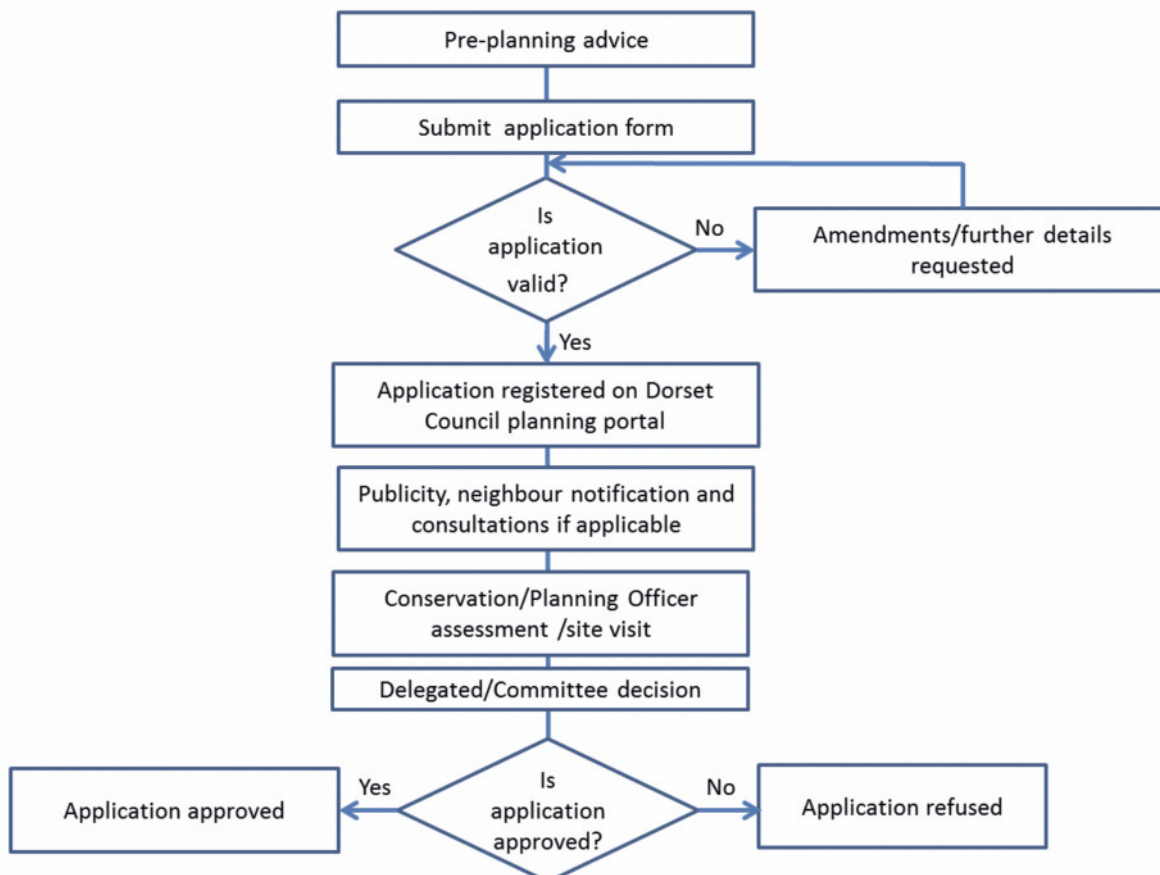
See Appendix 2 for a link to the Dorset Council Planning Portal.

Objections to any planning proposals are only taken into consideration from the perspective of

'Material Considerations'. Objections can be made by the Town Council, the District Council or anyone consulted, or interested in the planning application. Objections can be made on line, in writing or in person to the Planning Committees.

You should **always wait for planning permission** before starting any work as you are not guaranteed to get permission. The Conservation Officer, Planning Officer or Committee may require you to make an amendment to your application before they will approve it.

Planning Process



Material Considerations:

A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision. There are 6 main material considerations that are considered when reviewing a planning application to Dorset Council.

1. Residential Amenity – Living Conditions

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of light or overshadowing
- Layout and density of building
- Disabled persons' access

2. Traffic and Parking issues

- Parking
- Highway safety
- Traffic increase, access/egress/safety issues

3. Noise, Vibration, Soundproofing, Contaminations, land stability and Flood risk

- In line with Government policy

4. Hours of Operation – restriction

- If the development is a business there may be restrictions on operating hours or access by customers etc.

5. Design materials, Windows etc.

- Design, appearance and suitable materials
- Proposals in the Development Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)

6. Harm to the Environment (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Area/Landscape)

- Effect on listed building and Conservation Area
- In line with Government policy
- Nature conservation

However, issues such as loss of view, or negative effect on the value of properties or the proposed design of the property are **not** material considerations.

Where can you get help?

- Dorset Council (DC) Planning Officer – advice on pre-planning applications, assessing planning applications, carrying out site visits as required and making recommendations for changes or approval.

- DC Conservation Officer – advice on listed buildings or those in a Conservation Area, advises the Planning Officer and Planning Committee.

- Lyme Regis Society - the society can give an informal view and discuss options for work and how you might wish to progress it. We have experience and knowledge on both design and building work and the 'look and feel' of any changes and can help you avoid some of the obvious pitfalls of working on houses in a Conservation/small town setting. For example using traditional materials on older houses such as lime render instead of concrete render. We can also advise on some legal aspects of changes e.g. boundaries and the impact of neighbours developments. We provide advice on a broad range of issues, architectural, legal, building, planning and practical building advice.

- Architects & other design professionals – extensions, conversions, new build. Most local architects and professionals are aware of local trends and designs on what may be acceptable to local Planning Committees.

- Civil Engineers – if you need structural advice on a building or advice on how your land or a neighbour's property may be affected by any changes then it's best to contact a Civil Engineer to either give advice or conduct tests on the soil and substrata of your land.

- Local Builders – stone work, lime render, dry stone walls, thatchers, carpentry such as timber beams, floors and window shutters.

Finding a local builder: some people choose a builder on a personal recommendation from a neighbour or colleague who has used that particular tradesperson or company. Other ways are from noticing work going on at a local site and asking the owner if they would recommend

their builder, or by discussing a job with a number of builders and seeing which one understands your project and what you want to achieve.

The following organisations may help to advise on overall strategy for a location or development:

- Turn Lyme Green (TLG) promotes sustainable living in Lyme Regis and can help with information and advice on sustainable building options and energy saving technologies.
- Lyme Forward is an alliance of local people, organisations and service providers to improve local services. They will bid for grants and funds to improve the local areas particularly public spaces and buildings.
- Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) - is an independent strategic coastal partnership, which looks at the long term, broad-scale issues facing the Dorset coast and its inshore waters. Gives grants to improve the coastline and surrounding areas.
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) - caring for and celebrating the countryside. CPRE are producing a six-year plan to enhance, promote and protect the countryside, including the communities within it.
- Historic England – is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment.
- Natural England – can help with advice on protected species either in a building or at a site, for example if you have bats in a roof space or barn that you wish to develop. Some animals such as Dormice and Water Voles are also protected and any ingress on their land will need to be well managed. Natural England also advise on Ancient Trees and Woodland.

Please see Appendix 2 for website links.

Practical Help

Lyme Regis overview

Lyme Regis' position between the coast and the surrounding 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' requires consideration when any building work is planned. The town is built on hills which also has an impact on how and what is built and how that may affect existing neighbouring buildings. In addition there are problems with drainage and instability issues with any currently available new or 'green' building land.

Brownfield sites (those that have had buildings on the plot previously) also need to be treated with caution as to whether the land can support any substantial building changes. Rural sites with old barns, cattle sheds or outhouses will more often than not get planning permission for a change of use to a residence. However land that supported a single storey building may not be suitable to support a heavier and more substantial build. The land may require engineering groundwork to enable it to support a larger and heavier construction.

The River Lim

When planning any changes to a site or building you need to take into consideration how the following may affect your changes:

- Subsidence, land creep, hill inclines.
- The River Lim and any flooding possibility.
- Sea storms and the impact of waves, sea spray, water penetration and salt on any structures.
- Climate: Lyme Regis has a micro climate giving us warmer temperatures compared to the rest of the country. However when it does rain the town roads and paths can be flooded with streams of rain water especially as some houses vent their roof rainwater directly onto the paths or pavements rather than into the storm drains.



Managing what you have

Older houses and some of the more recently built ones have common issues where maintenance and repair are concerned. The general rule in considering repairs to older houses is to replace 'like with like', be aware that radically changing the look and feel of your home will not only jar with surrounding properties but may also result in you having to 'make good' (The Council can compel you to return the building to its original state) and may also affect the value of your property and annoy your neighbours. It's always recommended that if you are planning changes to your property that you involve your neighbours, even if it's just to let them know there will be workers around and that there may be building related noise and dust.

It's also worth talking to your builders about hours of work being reasonable for your surrounding neighbours i.e. no site work before 8 a.m. and after 7 p.m. for example. You or your builder may also wish to schedule deliveries to make the minimum impact on your neighbours and surroundings, for example no deliveries before 8 a.m.

Windows

Georgian and Victorian (and older) wooden windows can rot and need either replacement or repair. Repair can be less expensive than replacement if you find the right craftsman/carpenter. In some 1930s to 1950s housing Crittall windows (steel window frames with single glazing) can become

draughty and warped over time. Many of these windows have been replaced by UPVC in those houses and flats outside the Conservation Area.

Historic England offers a wealth of advice about options for adding double glazing to traditional windows (see Appendix 2 for a website link to a comprehensive booklet).

Wooden Window with internal shutters



In practical terms, it is often impossible to replace existing glass in multi-paned historic windows with double glazing - even where 'slim-profile' Insulated Glass Units (IGUs) are used - without having to alter the frames and glazing bars to accommodate the increased thickness and weight of the glazing. In double-hung sash windows without glazing bars, the sashes are often replaced but the sash boxes are retained and heavier weights added to balance the increased weight of glass. Sash boxes control the opening and closing of the sash windows.

Double glazing may be considered in the following circumstances:

- where a historic window retains no significant glass, and has sufficiently deep glazing rebates and is robust enough to accommodate the increased thickness and weight of IGUs without significant alteration (for example, late Victorian or Edwardian 'one-over-one' sash window or a simple casement).
- where an existing replacement window of sympathetic design is to be retained and is capable of accommodating IGUs.
- steel window sections that are able to accommodate a slim IGU.
- where a window is beyond repair and needs to be replaced although single paned glass may still be a Conservation Officer requirement.

Where Planning Officers do not allow double glazing then secondary glazing is possible but can be difficult to manage and might well lead to rot due to condensation. Secondary glazing can look unpleasant and detract from the appearance of your property. Traditional approaches to heat insulation and avoidance of draughts can be more effective and in keeping with the age of the house such as the use of internal wooden shutters, suitable heavy curtains etc.

Where UPVC windows have been introduced into a listed building, either before the introduction of the Conservation Area or in contravention of the Conservation Area or Listed Building controls, these may need to be removed. A good example is the Rock Point Inn which had many alterations over the years including the addition of UPVC windows, the new owners (St Austell Brewery) are replacing all the UPVC historical additions with wooden windows and doors in keeping with the age of the building.

Doors

Replacing doors on older houses, for example where wood has rotted requires a similar approach as windows. Repairing is cheaper and easier to pass through the planning and conservation process than replacing.

If you are replacing a door then the 'like for like' situation is easier to get approval for on a listed building.

'Madiera' door



As a general rule only houses outside the Conservation Area will be able to fit composite or double glazed replacement doors to a property, however you may find these are more prevalent in the Conservation Area than you would expect. Before the Conservation Area was designated many alterations were carried out that would not now receive permission. For example replacing thatch with tile, or wooden windows with UPVC.

Roofs

There are a variety of roof treatments in Lyme Regis ranging from thatch, slate tiles (various hues), cement tiles, corrugated iron panels, earthenware ridge tiles and decorative embellishments and leaded treatment to modern glass reinforced plastic and green or living roofs. A green roof is one planted with vegetation such as grass sod, sedum plants, moss or wild flowers on an aggregate base (a thin growing medium or 'soil') on a waterproof membrane covering the roof surface.

In the Conservation Area Planning Officers might well insist on particular type of slate if you are repairing or replacing your roof tiles.



Thatched roof

More recent additions to roof 'furniture' include solar panels and attachments such as aerials and satellite dishes. It is always wise to discuss any new attachment or addition to the exteriors of any of the older buildings with Conservation or Planning teams.

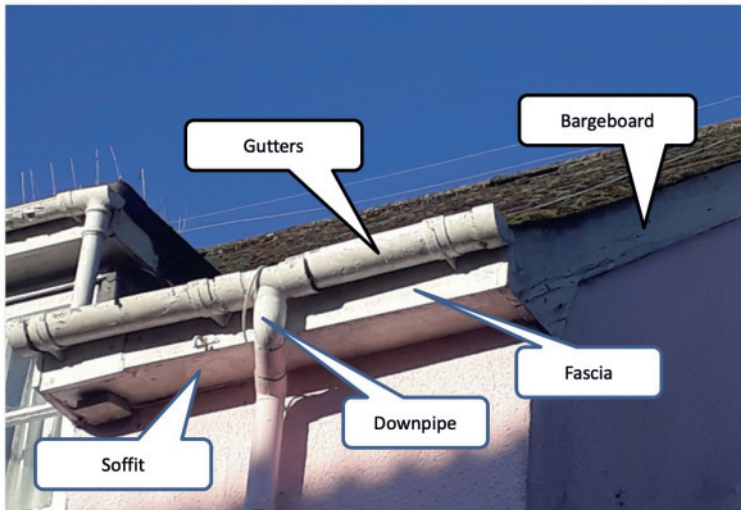
Whatever the external materials of your roof, there should be good heat insulation within the roof structure. (Advice is available from The Energy Saving Trust – see Appendix 2).

Solar panels/tiles

Many solar products are now more efficient than before and can produce a reasonable amount of electricity, some installations even produce enough energy so a householder can sell excess energy produced back to the main electricity grid. Most houses in a Conservation Area will have severe restrictions on the places that they may attach solar panels. Some houses will be allowed to put solar panels on roofs that are not street facing, or on other buildings on the site for example a garage, out-house or shed roof. Every application is judged on its own merits. Lyme benefits from having a large amount of sunlight compared to other parts of the UK and any south facing aspects could be of real use in reducing the amount of fossil fuel consumed and result in cost saving on bills.

Bats in your Belfry?

Some older houses, churches, barns etc. play host some protected wildlife species for example bats. Rural areas also accommodate animals and plants that are protected by law. You can accommodate or share your space with a range of wildlife and managing any changes to their habitat should be carried out very sensitively with advice from local experts.



Soffits and Fascia

Guttering and Downpipe



Guttering and Downpipes

Guttering can be wooden, cast iron, steel, zinc, aluminium or plastic. Rainfall patterns are changing and it is worth considering the dimensions of your gutters and downpipes to ensure that they will meet the rain water disposal needs from your roof.

Soffits, fascias and bargeboards in older houses are generally wooden and when these rot it is an attractive prospect to use UPVC materials for cost savings and durability. Listed buildings will generally require to replace their soffits with 'like for like' wooden ones. Guttering and downpipes are attached to the fascia.

Aluminium is an attractive replacement material to use instead of cast iron in both guttering and downpipes as it does not rust, it's lightweight and looks smart. Again any changes to the materials used on listed buildings may not be allowed by the Conservation or Planning Officer.

Change of Use

Some buildings that have had an industrial or retail past are now being used as domestic houses and apartments. This can apply to shops and other buildings that have a future life as a dwelling place, for example a Mill or factory. Any change of use needs to be approved by the local Planning Committee. Once a 'change of use' application has been approved by Dorset Council then work can commence on making that property more relevant. Change of use applications are often supported by an economic report which will detail the effect the change may have on the local economy, for example if the last grocery shop in a central position in a town requested a change of use, this would probably be refused with the hope that either the applicant or another business may wish to use the premises for a similar enterprise. A curtain and blind shop on the edge of the main shopping area and outside the main footfall area may well get approval for change of use into a dwelling or rental property.



Higher Mill Flats



Largigi Hotel

Georgian House



Larger house conversion to apartments/flats

Larger houses that are uneconomic to run as a 6 or 7 bedroom home may prove more useful as smaller dwellings. Some larger homes or buildings are converted to hotels or guest houses, but some are changed to smaller units providing more local housing for residents. An architect will be able to advise on any additional requirements such as internal fire doors, escape routes and any external fire exits required to ensure these residences comply with any fire requirements.

New builds and additions

New builds, extensions and additions such as porches or conservatories should consider their surroundings and try to tie in with the ambience and character of that location. New ideas and designs are to be welcomed as they keep the town in the contemporary world. However there is always a balance to be achieved with the traditional and well-respected heritage that we wish to maintain with more modern, innovative design.

Woodberry Down House

Balconies

Balconies generally need planning permission and also need to comply with building regulations in regard to handrails and guardrails etc., in addition it is worth discussing any changes with your neighbours as neighbours can formally object if your





balcony infringes on their privacy etc. Replacing an existing balcony is the same 'like for like' approach usually.

Fairfield Park

Boundaries

Sometimes garden boundaries become blurred due to neglecting maintenance of fences or long standing informal usage. When a piece of land not owned by the occupier is used consistently for a number of years (between ten – twelve years) 'Adverse Possession' may mean that the land is then 'owned' by the occupier. To clarify a boundary you can get a copy of the title deeds of land from the Land Registry for a small fee (see Appendix 2).

It is always wise to ensure that any boundaries are clearly marked and no informal usage by another person is allowed. Renting a piece of land to a neighbour with a clear contract would clarify any ownership issues that might occur in the future.

Foundations

Foundations of a building form a strong, stable platform on which the walls can be built. Modern foundations are usually trenches or 'footings' up to 1 metre (just over 3 foot) in depth that are then filled with poured concrete which is allowed to dry. Some foundations contain an additional support structure of steel rods tied together to strengthen the foundation. Walls are then constructed on these supporting foundations. A complete base of a building consists of the wall foundation and the floor of the building, sometimes called a 'raft'. Steel rods or mesh are tied together, concrete is poured over the steel mesh structure to produce a very solid foundation base for the whole building.

On older buildings some have either extremely shallow foundations or none at all and are just built on the earth or rock of the ground. Unless there is any subsidence (the ground falls away) or slip (the building slides down an incline) no action needs to be taken unless any problems occur.

If there are any problems, such as major cracks in the walls, then underpinning may be required. Underpinning is a major undertaking where the walls and structure of a house are first supported by acroprops (extendable metal poles which support the weight of your house) and scaffolding. Then the walls to be underpinned have areas dug out at their base which are then back filled by concrete sometimes over steel mesh (underpinned), the area to be underpinned is worked on progressively so that the wall/house is subject to as little stress as possible (and your house doesn't fall down).

Damp Course

A damp course prevents the water in the ground travelling from the ground up the foundations and into and through the walls. These days it is normally a plastic membrane laid after a few courses (or layers) of bricks have been constructed on the foundations. Some older versions of a damp course relied on slate tiles or a layer of bitumen to prevent the ingress of water.

Older houses may have no damp course at all and not incur any problem with damp.

If there are damp areas in a house there are now many treatments that can be 'injected' into the walls to form a barrier and reduce or prevent damp coming through the walls. Ventilation can also play a major role in making sure that the circulating fresh air reduces the amount of damp air confined to the interior of the house.

Cellars

Cellars were mainly built to be storage areas, often to provide a coal cellar for the building. If a cellar is upgraded to become living accommodation it may have to be treated for damp and if the head height is insufficient, may have to have the floor dug out. Any excavations in the cellar can lead to structural problems if the walls are not then properly supported, always seek advice before starting to dig!

Walls (garden, additions)

Garden landscaping often goes through fads and fashions.

The traditional chunky stone walls can be seen in the old town with a variety of finishes. Red brick walls are more prevalent in the Anning Road area. Building to compliment the local vernacular makes for a continuity of style and locality. New builds such as Woodberry Down have their own architectural style as well as a mix of materials such as brick and shingle.

Walls not only provide boundary markers, they may also be retaining walls to prevent land slip and act as wind breaks.

Party Walls

Many buildings in Lyme Regis are terraced or semi-detached and any shared walls with your neighbours need to be respected by both parties. Where you need to undertake work on a shared or 'party' wall you should get the correct legal permissions from your neighbour. For example if you wish to extend into your roof space and want to install a new floor, which includes hanging joist brackets from the party wall to support the floor. Sometimes it's also useful to get advice from a civil engineer who will be able to advise on whether a wall is structurally strong enough to support the additional weight or accommodate the changes.

Wall Finishes

There are a range of wall finishes in Lyme Regis:

Cob. A mixture of straw, horsehair (or similar), sand, local clay/subsoil and water. This can be seen in quite a few of Lyme Regis buildings. Constructed by progressively building up layers which are compressed to form a thick solid wall. There are local experts in Cob building techniques for both new builds and repairs.

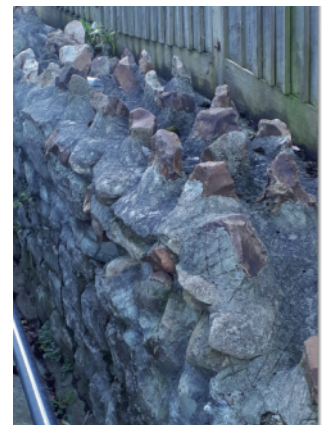


Some Walls -

Round top wall

End wall

Shark's teeth



Stone. From lime mortar around stone blocks, through to flint and Blue Lias. Blue Lias is worth mentioning in more detail as it's a local 'rough' stone that was used in building many of the local houses. It was a cheap, easily found material but was a poor building material so many houses (and some local churches) that have walls built of Blue Lias were rendered to give protection and to strengthen the wall and also provide a waterproof finish that would be more resistant to the weather.

Wood Shingle. There are some older and some recent buildings that rely on wood for their structure and cladding. Wood Shingle (small overlapping wooden tiles that repel water and form a protective cloak around the main structure of the house) will lighten with age and can be made from a range of different types of wood, typically Cedar. Primarily shingle is used on the walls of a house, usually forming a protective covering for the upper floors, however some houses will use them on roofs or porch roofs.

Wood Cladding: Uses longer planks of wood to form the external wall either vertically or horizontally attached.

Right - Stone and lime mortar

Below - Wood shingles



Brick. Some of the houses that were built in Victorian times benefit from being built from semi-engineering bricks with a slim concrete mortar profile. Semi-engineering brick is more robust than normal bricks so these structures are generally more resilient than later mass produced brick builds using normal red and yellow bricks that came into common use around the turn of the 19th Century. The Anning Road estate built in the 1950s has the solid build of what was originally built as Council Housing with good proportions and services.



Windsor Terrace - brick and render

Render. There are two main types of render, the traditional lime render and the more modern concrete render. Lime is a caustic substance so must be used with care and it's probably best to use a professional builder or company to mix and apply any lime render. It's mixed over a period of a day and takes around 3-7 days to cure in a frost free temperature. It also can't be applied in extremely high or very low temperatures as it will not dry out properly to form a strong weather proof finish. The benefit of lime render is that it's breathable and will not trap water or condensation within a house which is essential when caring for an older property. Walls built out of straw bales would also require a protective coating of lime render both inside and outside.

Concrete render does not allow walls to 'breathe' in the same way as lime render so other methods are used to ventilate a house or building such as ventilation or air bricks and window vents. Typically blockwork walls (using cast concrete blocks similar to large Lego bricks or large rectangle blocks, Breeze blocks) will be concrete rendered.

There are also long term render paint finishes that are pre-coloured and have a life expectancy of around 20-25 years. In Lyme our colour palette has moved to the more muted pastel colours over the past 50 years that is common in country areas.

Decorative touches

Houses in older Lyme tend to have some quirky decorative touches, Coombe Street has Bunting House (complete with weatherproof bunting), an artist's house in Pound Street has balancing stones in the garden and statues come and go both in public space and private gardens. When artists lived in at the bottom of Mill Green a metal violinist serenaded people as they walked by (very, very quietly). These are more of a subjective expression of the home owners taste, usually without much overall impact on the space and temporary in nature.

There is no formal palette of colours that's mandatory in the Conservation Area. Planning Officers however might well insist on certain decorative finishes and it might be useful to discuss with the Lyme Regis Society prior to making your planning application. Changing the colour of a listed building does require Listed Building Consent.

Coade stone decorations and decorative urns can be seen on a number of houses in Lyme. These are constructed from a mix of ground stone and mortar and fired to a hard finish so are very durable.

Some houses make their house number or name into a memorable feature.



Coade Stone Urn

Lyme Dream

Snail House



External Lighting

More homes these days have either motion triggered security lighting or take advantage of LED lighting which saves on energy costs and can illuminate alleyways and steps to facilitate safer access. Any external lighting or cameras that are attached to a listed property needs planning permission. For more modern houses lighting in keeping with the age of the property will blend in more with the surroundings, introducing extremely modern or bright LEDs into an older style property may look out of character and detract from the overall look of a property. LED lights come in all shapes and sizes with different 'temperatures' (the operating temperature of the light) which results on a range of light 'colours' for example warm white and cool white. LED lighting is extremely effective these days and has the benefit of not having to replace bulbs or fittings as regularly as the old incandescent light bulbs.

Lyme Regis Society

The society can give an informal view and discuss options for work and how you might wish to progress it. We have experience and knowledge on both design and building work and the 'look and feel' of any changes and can help you avoid some of the obvious pitfalls of working on houses in a conservation/small town setting. For example using traditional materials on older houses such as lime render instead of concrete render. We can also advise on some legal aspects of changes e.g. boundaries and the impact of neighbours developments.

We provide advice on a broad range of issues, architectural, legal, building, planning and practical building advice. It is always better to seek helpful advice before starting work so that you do not waste your money, your time or have to redo any work that you have started before getting the appropriate permissions.

Fitting In With Your Surroundings

Harmonise with a modern twist

Styles do change and what's acceptable will evolve over time. For example in the 1930s the advice was to render and paint all buildings in Lyme Regis a grey colour. With time people have wanted to express more colours within the town and pastel hues for render and paint have become more popular and fashionable. A good example of this is our beach huts along the promenade. At one time these were all the same colour (Brown: wood painted with preservative). When the council painted the council owned huts in 2008, the Lyme Regis Society suggested a range of pastel colours might be more appropriate and make the promenade more attractive for residents and visitors. Now our mutedly colourful beach huts are a welcome contrast to the stone and concrete sea defences along the sea front.

Render

Pastel colours are more prevalent these days, and some people select the vibrant Devon Pink for their decorating palette. Others choose more muted shades in line with many other houses, lighter pinks, blues and greens will all be seen in and around the old town and not forgetting white. Consider how the colour that you select will fit into the overall street scene where you live. It's worth using tester pots to make sure that the colour you choose is still what you expect when applied to your render or external finish and also contrasts sympathetically with your neighbours houses. Remember if you are decorating a Listed Building you will need Listed Building Consent to change the colour of your external walls.

Start the conversation

Talk to neighbours about the changes you intend to make so they don't get any surprises and can comment on any changes you want to make, they may have some helpful suggestions that you may not have thought of. With your neighbours on board with your plans, they may have useful contacts and suggestions that could help with building work or design.

Consider any changes that you're thinking of making in the context of not just your own property but in the context of your surrounding neighbours and spaces and any general themes of design and colour. Harmonising with them will enhance your own changes and ensure that the character of local Lyme Regis areas is maintained.

Street Lighting

Lampposts in Lyme Regis were updated in 2003. The width of some streets means that some street lighting is attached to buildings. Most lampposts are now primarily LED (Light Emitting Diode) lighting which saves on power and often they are 'directional' i.e. are focussed to shine their light in a certain direction – downwards, to reduce the impact of light pollution of our skies.

The promenade and Langmoor Gardens benefit from modern LED lighting with canopies to assist in directing the light downwards and they incorporate the ammonite design which blends well with our town branding with a nod to our status in the Jurassic Heritage Coast.



Security cameras

Security cameras are also now being used more widely, cameras are now less obtrusive and more discreet which helps to improve security but not impact on the overall appearance of the building. Again any 'attachment' to houses in the Conservation Area need to be discussed with Planning and Conservation. Innovative ways to work with modern technology can often be suggested for example the new Wi-Fi CCTV

based doorbell offer monitoring and the ability to record any unwanted visitors to the property. These systems can be remotely accessed via your smartphone which means you can see and talk to any callers to your house if you wish to.

Architectural Heritage Suppliers

If you do have to repair or replace something that has a history you may find something that would fit in with the age of your house from a salvage yard or architectural heritage supply yard. They may also be able to suggest firms that are used to working in older houses in the locality.

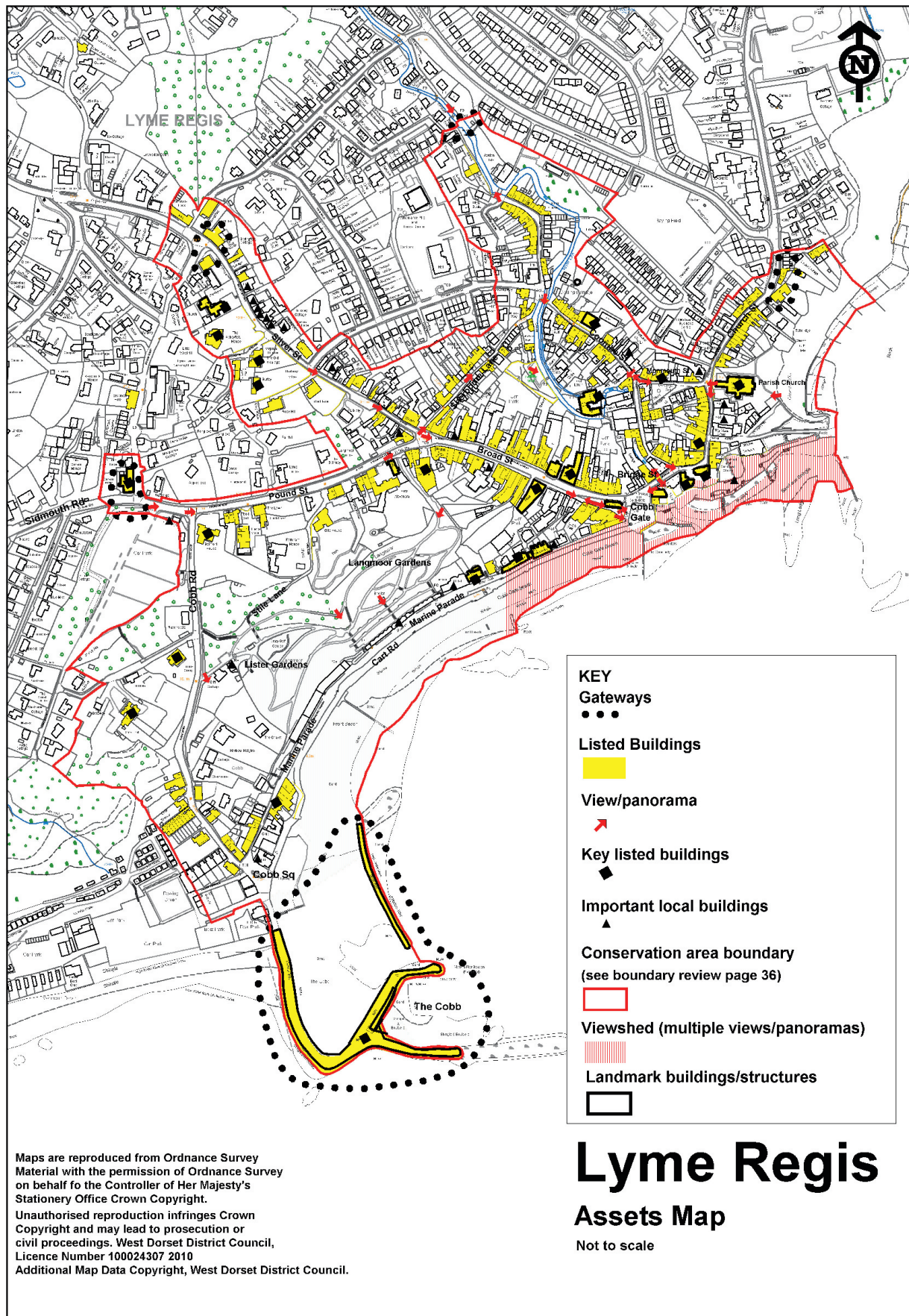
Scaffolding

One trade that is definitely not going to go out of business in Lyme Regis is scaffolding firms. When purchasing a house it is worth considering how you will maintain roofs and any aspects that need scaffolding to access them. In certain roads in Lyme there are regular controlled closures every few years to allow residents to clear gutters, repair roofs and paint exteriors. If your scaffolding is based outside the perimeter of your property it needs a special licence to allow it to be on the 'highway' (a footpath or a road).

Insurance

A final thought on insurance, when you insure your property always describe it as accurately as you can, underinsuring may cause you problems if you make a claim. If in doubt ask for written advice from your insurer and keep these notes with your policy documents.


Appendix 1 - Lyme Regis Conservation Area



COURTESY OF DORSET COUNCIL

Appendix 2 - Useful Links

Lyme Regis Society for advice and information	https://www.lymeregissociety.org.uk/
Lyme Regis Conservation Area Map	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-constraints/conservation-areas/west-dorset/pdfs/lyme-regis-conservation-area-appraisal-review-map.pdf
Listed Buildings in Lyme Regis	https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/lyme-regis-west-dorset-dorset#.XhRt0M83Zjo
Dorset Council Planning portal – information on planning and how to apply.	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-application-search-and-comment.aspx
National Planning Framework	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
Permitted Development	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission/householder-permitted-development.aspx
Material Considerations	https://www.planningportal.co.uk/faqs/faq/4/what_are_material_considerations
Dorset Council Listed Building Consent	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/planning-constraints/listed-buildings/listed-buildings.aspx
Certificate of Lawfulness	https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/1app/guidance/guidance_note-certificates_of_lawfulness_listed_building.pdf
Land Registry – check boundaries and plot ownership	https://eservices.landregistry.gov.uk/eservices/FindAProperty/view/QuickEnquiryInit.do?id=p_search_link
Jurassic Coast Trust	https://jurassiccoast.org/
The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/
The National Trust	https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/home
Natural England	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role
Local Green Space Designations	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#Local-Green-Space-designation
Tree Preservation Order	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/tree-management/tree-preservation-orders/tree-preservation-orders.aspx
Certificates of Lawfulness for listed buildings	https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/1app/guidance/guidance_note-certificates_of_lawfulness_listed_building.pdf
Lawful Development Certificate'	https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/1app/guidance/guidance_note-certificates_of_lawfulness_listed_building.pdf
Turn Lyme Green Sustainable Living Advice	https://turnlymegreen.co.uk/ Polly Benfield on 01297 446066
Historic England advice on window repair	https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/
Historic England – general advice on maintenance	https://historicengland.org.uk/
Roof insulation advice	https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation/roof-and-loft
UNESCO World Heritage Site List	https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/
Cobb advice	http://www.sustainablebuild.co.uk/cobbbuilding.html
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	https://www.cpre.org.uk/
Natural England - Landscape, protected species and sites, rights of way etc.	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england

The background image shows a stone building with white window frames and a white railing overlooking a river in flood. The water is turbulent and brown, with a large log floating in it. The scene is captured from a slightly elevated position, looking down at the river.

In the 1930s a building pamphlet written by the Lyme Regis Society helped builders and residents craft and maintain buildings in Lyme Regis to sympathetically fit in with the character and surroundings of the town. That pamphlet now only exists as a memory and extensive searches have failed to unearth a copy.

This 'Lyme Regis Building and Environment Guide' booklet captures the spirit of Lyme Regis. The Guide details, in plain English, basic building requirements and methods that may help residents and builders to plan, repair, maintain and build in a style that enhances the town for both our residents and visitors.

www.lymeregissociety.org.uk

Picture - The Lym in flood, 2012