

METHODOLOGY

Initial planning

Understanding the attitude of conservation officers to SPDG is crucial because they are so important in determining its use. The initial proposal was to pose open-ended questions, during structured interviews, to a selected number of conservation officers. Emails were sent to conservation officers across the South East and South West. The response rate on this basis was extremely low and after discussion with a number of them it became clear that, because of the nature of their job (many of them work part-time and spend time on site visits), they are unable to commit to an interview or dedicate time in the day to answering open-ended questions. It was, therefore, decided that in order to achieve a meaningful response rate, the questionnaire would need to take no more than 30 minutes to complete; consist mainly of closed-ended questions; and be in web format so that it could be delivered electronically and completed outside of office hours.

To meet the objectives of the study it was decided necessary to use 3 methods of data collection:

- Survey;
- Desk research; and
- Semi-structured interview.

The survey was intended to produce quantitative data that could be analysed to form an understanding of the approach of conservation offices to SPDG in listed buildings. This data would then be used to draw conclusions about the similarities and differences in approach between conservation officers and about how guidance from the Heritage Agencies is interpreted in practice. It was hoped that the survey would be completed by enough conservation officers in England, Scotland and Wales to enable meaningful conclusions to be drawn about the approach to SPDG in these three different regions.

The desk research had two main purposes: to provide an additional source of data to compliment the survey data, a form of triangulation; and to identify and analyse the guidance issued by the different Heritage Agencies about SPDG in historic buildings.

Initially the interviews (to be conducted on conservation officers) were intended to produce qualitative data which the closed-ended questions of the survey could not achieve. In reality, however, the survey produced significant qualitative data because many respondents used

the further comment field at the end of each question to expand on their response. In light of this, the interviews were used to fill knowledge gaps arising from the survey and to address new issues that the survey responses revealed as being significant. For instance, conservation officers were asked about the procedure used in their local authority to deal with listed building consent applications and whether building regulation officers were consulted.

Another question focused on whether they considered SPDG to be acceptable in modern extensions to listed buildings.

Quantitative data collection - Survey

Design stage

The questionnaire was developed using SurveyMonkey. A copy of the survey can be seen in the appendices. The information for participants, including ethical and data protection issues, were incorporated into the main body of the survey and respondents could only complete the survey if they had checked the consent box. The questionnaire took the form of 8 sections and consisted of 35 questions. When designing the survey, the following criteria were applied:

- The number of open-ended questions was kept to a minimum.
- No question required a response.
- For participants wanting to qualify their response, a 'further comment' field was added to each closed-ended question.
- All of the closed-ended questions (apart from two) were mutually exclusive making it impossible for respondents to check more than one answer.
- Some questions were designed to reveal attitude towards energy efficiency in listed buildings and SPDG, in particular. These had Likert four point agree/disagree scales with an additional 'don't know' field.
- Some questions were designed to extract factual information such as the number of SPDG applications over a given period; or whether conservation teams have produced guidelines on SPDG in listed buildings.
- Many of the questions were designed to reveal the general approach of a conservation officer to listed building applications to replace windows with SPDG. Most of these behaviour questions used a Likert three point frequency scale (never, occasionally, frequently) with an additional 'don't know' field whilst others used a Likert four point frequency scale of yes, in most cases, in a few cases or no.
- A ranking question was used to reveal the level of concern over different aspects of

SPDG in listed buildings.

- At the end of the questionnaire there was an option to agree to a semi-structured interview.

The purpose of the survey was to obtain data that would help meet the objectives of the project which were to discover the attitude and approach of conservation officers to SPDG in listed buildings; find out whether there are variations in approach between different regions; and to compare what gets authorised at local authority level to what's being recommended at guidance level by the Heritage Agencies.