

# INSIDE HOUSING

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## History lessons

### **New laws should simplify developments involving listed buildings and conservation areas, says Chad Sutton**

Developments involving listed buildings and in conservation areas are poised to become easier because of provisions being debated in the government's Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill 2012-2013.

Conservation area consent is to be abolished and replaced with a requirement to obtain planning permission for demolition within a conservation area.

It will be easier to apply for a certificate of immunity (which certifies that a building is immune from being listed for a period of time), as the government will remove the requirement for there to be a planning application or planning permission for works proposed to the building before applying for a certificate.

The extent of special features in a listed building will be further defined. At present, many listed building descriptions are vague and imprecise.

The bill will introduce the right to apply for a certificate of lawfulness of works to a listed building. This certificate will confirm that listed building consent is not required for proposed works. There will also be a system of listed building consent orders, which will specify that certain works may not require listed building consent.

Overall, these reforms will simplify the treatment of these heritage assets under the planning system and provide greater certainty to social landlords and developers. In the past, there have been cases where developments have been frustrated or delayed because of the special treatment afforded to listed buildings and conservation areas and any measures to assist housing providers and developers are welcome.

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