



Role Profile

Job Title: Conservation Officer	Role Profile Number: OPN105
Grade: N	Date Prepared: 11.06.2021
Directorate/Group: Economy and Development (Planning Service)	Reporting to: Senior Conservation Officer
Structure Chart attached:	Yes

Job Purpose

As a Conservation professional this role promotes a high level of quality in the built environment through the protection and enhancement of the Borough's Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets, by providing expert advice and interpretation of primary legislation, planning policy, local guidance and the control of development. This includes engagement in proactive work and creativity in finding solutions from a heritage perspective, within developments, a range of projects to contribute to key Council priorities and ambitions of the Local Plan. The role is also responsible for the promotion and protection of the Borough's Historic Environment and Assets.

Key Accountabilities

- Specialist to provide expert design and conservation advice on a range of planning and conservation area designations, management plans, wide ranging planning submissions, enforcement actions and appeals. This includes the preparation of consultation responses, appeal statements, proofs of evidence and the representation of the Local Planning Authority as an expert witness at Public Inquiries, Examinations in Public and Hearings.
- Manage a caseload of DM consultations and other activities, to ensure timely responses to meet agreed standards in association with Line Manager and in liaison with case officers.
- Support and facilitate the delivery of conservation projects required in the production of statutory local planning documents for Swindon Borough, or by legislation including support to contracted specialists allocated to each project and other key stakeholders.
- Undertake and update Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and assist in the preparation of Design Guides, Design Briefs and Design Codes as appropriate.
- Collate evidence and prepare topic papers as necessary to support the preparation of statutory Development Plan policies, in relation to conservation and archaeology.
- Maintain and update the Council's records in relation to the National Heritage List for England (produced by Historic England) and the Historic Environment Record (produced by Wiltshire Council).
- Provide expert advice and interpretation of designated and non-designated heritage assets including the production of statutory guidance relating to them.

- Respond directly to requests and provide expert advice to residents and developers on historic buildings including repairs and maintenance. This includes recommending courses of action, and negotiation on proposals and projects that impact on Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and archaeology.
- Contribute to partnership work, and build and maintain relationships with statutory and voluntary bodies relating to the historic environment and archaeology.
- Develop and maintain good working relations and linkages throughout the Borough Council, other local authorities and statutory bodies, professionals and stakeholders as well as the private sector, in furtherance of the promotion of historic buildings and archaeological issues and in order to deliver complex and wide ranging compliance and regulatory activities.
- Undertake out of hours working (essential for the role required particularly concerning stakeholder engagement, Committee and other meetings and preparation for Inquiries) and flexible working such as working from home, site meetings and remote working.
- Deputise for the Team Leader and represent the Council at meetings as required, and undertake other duties relevant to the role and the post level.

Knowledge & Experience

Candidates must have substantial knowledge and experience in the following areas of business and will be required to provide evidence of this:

- Bachelor Degree (minimum) and/or postgraduate qualification (preferred) in either Conservation of Historic Buildings, Building Conservation or equivalent as recognised/endorsed by the relevant professional body (see below). This is required to ensure the post holder has an appropriate level of knowledge to undertake key accountabilities at a senior level.
- Membership or working towards membership (or eligibility for membership by qualifications and experience) of a relevant professional body (e.g. IBHC or suitable equivalent), required to prepare and present evidence at planning enquiries, examinations and hearings.
- Post qualification experience working on projects in conservation (essential and required by professional bodies), within a Local Planning Authority (preferred) or in the public or private sector.
- A detailed and up to date knowledge, understanding and experience of working across all key areas of conservation and historic building design. Including, but not limited to, the relevant Town & Country Planning Act(s), Conservation Area Legislation (both essential) as well as historic townscape analysis, historic architectural design, building construction, repair, maintenance, historic restoration and conservation and an awareness of ecology in historic environments (all preferred).
- Experience of work within the Development Management process of a Local Planning Authority providing expert advice, formal consultation responses and a wide experience of negotiating conservation issues on a range of complex planning applications and appeals including experience of enforcement and compliance work (preferred).
- A thorough understanding and experience of work within the Local Development Plan process (preferred), including the preparation and/or commissioning of evidence, studies and policies including sustainability appraisals and strategic environmental assessments through to examination and adoption.

- Experience of communicating and presenting at different levels to the public, key stakeholders and decision makers to influence the understanding and appreciation of heritage issues across a range of projects and topics.
- Experience in the preparation and presentation of evidence to Public Examinations or Inquiries (preferred) and Planning Committee (essential) as well as the provision of training to Parishes and elected Members on Conservation matters (preferred). Experience of preparation and presentation of evidence to Magistrates Courts relating to Listed Building and other heritage case law to help influence and provide evidence for decision makers is preferable.
- A passion and empathy for securing high quality design and conservation of historic buildings (and archaeology) through good negotiating skills, balanced with a broader understanding of other factors that may influence and impact on outcomes.
- Computer literacy in word processing, database, spreadsheet, GIS and presentation packages (essential). Experience of the Uniform system (particularly Listed Building Module) and use of virtual meeting software are highly preferable.
- Prepared to undertake out of hours working (essential for the role required particularly concerning stakeholder engagement, Committee and other meetings and preparation for Inquiries) and flexible working such as working from home, site meetings and remote working.

Qualifications

- Bachelor Degree (minimum) and/or postgraduate qualification (preferred) in either Conservation of Historic Buildings, Building Conservation or equivalent as recognised/endorsed by the relevant professional body (see below).

Decision Making

- Regular and timely decision-making in relation to the expert advice given in light of complex legislation and professional judgement based on experience and knowledge. This advice is also made in the context of the potentially long-term consequences for Swindon's environment, other conflicting requirements and the potential risk or harm to heritage assets.
- Point of contact for advice and negotiation on conservation and archaeology schemes, requiring decisions to be made on the acceptability of a variety of proposals based on experience and judgement and sometimes in pressurised situations.
- Policy formulation – judgemental recommendations on land use allocations and planning policies for Conservation and Archaeology at all levels with implementation being up to 20 years, and planned developments lasting for hundreds of years once built.
- Inquiries – Delegated responsibility for conservation, archaeology and listed building policy formulation and amendment at Inquiries.
- Considering proposals in light of current legislative and policy framework. A large proportion of expert responses on planning applications and enquiries include professional judgemental recommendations to determine the acceptability of a proposal in conservation and archaeology terms. Each heritage asset has to be dealt with having regard to its own unique special significance and each planning case has to be dealt with in terms of its own merits and with consideration of the circumstances of the site and context. The development plan is a starting point, but significant professional judgement is also required and the caseload can be varied and highly complex.

Creativity and Innovation

- The post-holder will be required to produce innovative solutions based on creativity, pragmatism and experience, for a variety of situations many of which will be complex and to negotiate skilfully in the pursuit of high quality design and the protection of conservation interests and archaeology.
- The post-holder will be required to make a significant contribution to the production of planning policy documents, geared to Swindon’s unique requirements, involving joint-working with other organisations and public participation, and requiring specialist experience and knowledge, creative thinking, and wise judgements.
- Some specific projects and tasks associated with this post (including multiple Historic England HAZ projects) will have no existing examples on which to draw, demanding innovative thinking in devising new approaches to best fulfil the brief.

<u>Job Scope</u>	Budget Holder	No
Number and types of jobs managed N/A	Responsibility	.
Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others	Asset Responsibility	Laptop, mobile phone, other necessary equipment

Contacts and Relationships

(how the role relates to the work of others i.e. officers, groups, committees, general public, members, partner organisations, internal and external contacts of the council)

- Vast array of contacts and relationships day to day across the Council including (but not limited to) the wider Planning team, Property colleagues, Highways and Housing to provide professional judgements on planning applications as well as all manner of heritage asset enquiries. Additional professional connections with Legal colleagues in terms of drafting and circulation of cabinet and committee reports and in preparing cases for Inquiries, Enforcement cases and tribunals, also in developing contracts. Liaison with the internal Communications Team to ensure that the media are provided with accurate information regarding development planning and Conservation issues.
- Daily contact with members of the public, key stakeholders, community organisations and Members of the Council. This includes ongoing engagement throughout the statutory planning process, formalised through the Statement of Community Involvement, as well as presentations to Parish liaison groups, Parish Council meetings, public and/or community meetings, Council Working Parties and Committees. Also daily contact responding to telephone, e-mailed or written enquiries on a range of related queries and providing expert advice. Contact with colleagues in PR/Media to initiate output and updates to the website (or other media formats), respond to enquiries including the provision of standing advice, and undertake initiatives as may be required to promote the work of the MDC team including training events, press articles or other publicity.

- Contact with Government Bodies, Professional Institutes and Regional Organisations such as CABE and Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), including regular contact with Historic England in respect of advice liaison on key projects (such as HAZ) and ratification of conservation matters.

Values and Behaviours

We strive to underpin our culture of being ‘At our Best’ through strong management and authentic leadership. This means getting the management basics right. We own and demonstrate accountability, both individually and collectively, and aim to get things right first time. Building on this we also expect everyone at SBC to demonstrate and live our organisational values and behaviours, by displaying:

- Accountability at all levels
- Customer care and pride in what we do
- Continuous learning and evaluation
- Valuing one another and the contribution each of us makes

Other Key Features of the role

(working environment / emotional / conditions i.e. regular outside work, unpleasant or hazardous conditions, practical demands such as standing, carrying or working in constrained positions, potential verbal abuse and aggression from people, or risk of injury).

- Innovate in service delivery – using the conservation /design process as a vehicle for the delivery of corporate projects and priorities.
- Personal drive and resilience as a specialist role – assisting in delivering change and leading by example seeking out learning opportunities and advice and support from external specialist bodies.
- Flexible in approach to secure the main aims and objectives of the role including out of work hours work, attending Planning Committees and lone working on site visits and meetings away from the office.
- Business awareness – anticipate changes to service delivery and put strategies in place
- Technical competence – extensive and expert knowledge and experience of conservation issues and the application of statutory legislation and policy.
- Excellent communication, negotiation and presentation skills – to present ideas to a range of parties.

Employee Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	
Line Managers Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	