

Guidelines for restorers and renovators

- 1** Retain the original character of the house. This means preserving its original appearance and interior features.
- 2** Don't 'over-restore'. Make sure the house still looks like an old building after you've finished the job. Some restored houses look like new buildings.
- 3** For major external and internal work stick to materials that were used when your house was built. This rules out modern building materials such as concrete blocks, metal-framed windows and so on. Some unobtrusive use of modern materials, such as laminates in the kitchen, is often necessary.
- 4** Details are important. This includes the type of decorative glass, mouldings on doors, hardware, light fittings and so forth. To explain the reference to glass, you don't introduce leadlight into a building which has never been fitted with it.
- 5** Understand and respect as far as possible the original uses of rooms. Sometimes changes are necessary but try not to alter the interior so completely that all trace of the original interior plan is lost.
- 6** Some houses were never meant to have *en-suite* bathrooms. Introducing an *en-suite* to a small house or cottage may cause serious damage to the original character of the building.
- 7** Old houses really come to life when painted in fashionable colours of the period and in the manner of the period. Stick to colours and colour schemes that are known to have been used on houses of your period.
- 8** Floors are best finished in the manner of the period in which your house was built. Avoid too much use of the floor-sander, perhaps limiting it to kitchens and lesser rooms. Modern polyurethane finishes should be avoided. Use finishes such as japan and tung-oil.
- 9** Fences are very important in enhancing the overall appearance of your property. Look at genuine old fences, observe the way they are designed and constructed and give your contractor detailed, preferably written and/or drawn, instructions on your requirements.
- 10** Garden design and plantings, especially in the front garden, will best complement your work on the building if you keep it in period with the house. Use plants and garden layouts of the time. Look at original gardens to understand the type of surface used on paths and driveways.
- 11** Additions and alterations should be in the manner and materials of the period in which your house was built. Extra living space is often best obtained by rear extensions. Hilly terrain often makes it possible to fit new rooms underneath, at the rear of the house,

by excavating. Avoid jacking-up timber cottages on level blocks because the result is often most unfortunate.

12 Remember that it's a house, not a museum. You and your family are just as much a part of the history of your house as anyone else. Live in it and enjoy it and, at the right time, pass it on to someone else. Hopefully, it will be in better shape after you have lived there than it was when you arrived.