

## **TECHNICAL NOTE No. 56**

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# **Burglar Alarms**

The installation of burglar alarms on historic buildings has become part of 20<sup>th</sup> century living. The object of this note is to offer guidance on their installation to historic buildings. In common with satellite dishes, television aerials and other additional ancillary 20<sup>th</sup> century features, anything which affects the character of the building will require listed building consent. The object will be to minimise the visual impact and avoid the necessity of having to apply for Listed Building Consent.

The main feature of the installation is the external alarm box. This not only acts as a visual deterrent but houses the alarm sirens and warning lights. They consequently are often large, brightly painted metal boxes, indeed there are now available mimic boxes with no alarm installation, the box acts purely as a visual deterrent.

It is important that historic building owners are not made more vulnerable to theft by forbidding the use of these protective systems, rather it is to recognise the value and architectural quality of the building and to sensitively position these alarms to cause minimum visual disruption.

It is desirable for the alarm boxes to be mounted away from the main façade of the building. Positioning to the rear or gable walls may be more appropriate and the use of the outbuildings or ancillary elements may provide alternative sites. Whilst these options may be possible with detached properties, problems are often encountered in terraces when individual properties display a large variety of types of alarms in every conceivable position causing a fair degree of visual intrusion. It would be most desirable to only install a single alarm box and this may be possible in terraces in common ownership, however in multiple occupancy individual care is required for each system. The use of a common appropriate position on the façade would be beneficial and provide uniformity.

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