



Criteria for bells and bell frames to be identified as being of historic significance

Scope

It is not anticipated that any bells or bell frames will be identified as being of historic significance until they are at least thirty years old.

Bells

Pre-1600

All bells irrespective of their state.

1600 to 1750

Bells of good quality by any founder (taking regard to such issues as rarity, casting quality, extent of subsequent intervention, and tonal quality).

Bells with interesting decorative features, for example unusual inscriptions or decorated canons. Significant work by any founders, including their largest, earliest or last bells.

Special consideration should be given to groups of 4 or more by one founder and date.

1750 to 1850

Bells of outstanding quality (taking regard to rarity, casting quality, extent of subsequent intervention, and tonal quality). Bells with interesting decorative features, for example unusual inscriptions or decorated canons.

Significant work by any founders, including their largest, earliest or last bells.

Complete rings of outstanding quality by one founder.

1851 to date

Significant examples of technical innovation.

Bell frames

Up to end of the sixteenth century

All complete frames or frames containing significant original work. That a frame contains a few reused pre-sixteenth century elements is not in itself a reason

for it to be identified as being of historic significance but is worthy of note. Timber foundation beams that support, or formerly supported, a bell frame merit consideration for identification in their own right. A limited number of windlasses that have been used to raise bells still survive, and merit consideration for identification in their own right.

Start of seventeenth century and after

Although a great many frames from this period survive they should not lightly be discarded, whatever material they are made of, even though not all will satisfy the criteria for identification. Frames that are important in the light of the factors below should be identified, along with examples of the work of competent and professional frame builders.





Criteria to assess whether a frame should be identified will include:

1. Quality, completeness and structural condition
2. Whether the frame is dated or documented and if its maker is known.
3. Whether the frame shows significant evidence of the development of the ring
4. Technical innovation and/or unusual features

In churches that were substantially rebuilt in the Victorian era the frame is often the oldest surviving timberwork still present in a building.

Complete installations

Special consideration should be given to installations when the bells and frame and, exceptionally, the tower are of the same date.

Church House
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3NZ

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