

LISTED BUILDINGS FACT SHEET

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Why are properties “listed”?

3% of the 21 million homes in Britain are listed by the Secretary of State for the Environment. Listing ensures that the architectural and historical interest of the building is carefully considered before any alterations either inside or outside are agreed. Brighton and Hove have the largest number of listed buildings outside London.

Buildings are recommended for listing by English Heritage. They can be listed because of age, rarity, architectural merit and method of construction. All buildings built before 1700 and which survived in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most buildings built between 1700 and 1840. A copy of your property’s individual listing is available on request to the Local Planning Department and will identify important features and some of the history.

Is there a different degree of “listing”

Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest.

Grade II * are particularly important buildings of more than special interest.

Grade II are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them.

Over 90% of all listed buildings are Grade II.

What does it mean for me if I want to carry out work to my property?

Local Planning Authorities usually control minor changes to listed buildings, but consult English Heritage over alterations to buildings of outstanding National interest, i.e., Grade I or II*. All listed buildings are specifically protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the listing covers both interior and exterior of the building and any structure within the boundaries of the property.

Any alterations which affect the character of the listed building require “Listed Building Consent” and work requiring consent can range from removing a fireplace to adding a large extension.

What if I am just carrying out internal alterations?

Internal features which are fixed to the building are considered equally as important as the walls and roof of the building. Internal joinery such as doors, fitted cupboards and panelling are all part of the “listed building” as well as features such as fireplaces and plasterwork. Listed Building Consent must be sought before altering or removing such features.

Do the Councils normally provide consent?

Councils will normally resist applications which propose unsympathetic sub division or extension of the listed building. With timber frame buildings, for instance, modest extensions which respect the original bay width and scale of the original building may be allowed but in some cases, extensions may not be considered acceptable. Many listed buildings have already been substantially extended in the past, and the Council may decide that further extensions would so damage the character of the original building that consent should not be given. Potential purchasers of listed buildings are therefore advised to consider the suitability of the existing building before they buy it, or alternatively consider submitting an application for their required alterations before they purchase to avoid disappointment if their proposals are rejected.

What if I am just carrying out repairs

Repairs to listed buildings using traditional materials and building techniques on a “like-for-like” basis will not usually require Listed Building Consent, but it is always wise to check with the Planning Department before commencing work. You may be required to submit a detailed specification for the repairs, and it is always advisable to appoint a professionally qualified person with experience in listed buildings to act on your behalf and to supervise the work. If Listed Buildings Consent is required, you will also need someone to prepare your application drawings which should consist of existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations, with details of specific items such as new joinery as necessary.

Work Requiring Listed Building Consent

The following non-exhaustive list has been drawn up to give you an idea of the type of work which requires Listed Building Consent and includes:-

1. Extensions and demolitions.
2. Repairs not carried out in matching materials.
3. Demolition and rebuilding of important features like chimneystacks.
4. Sandblasting stonework, brickwork and timber, both external and internal.
5. Exposing timbers and brickwork previously hidden beneath plaster or lime wash.
6. Stripping out internal plasterwork where it has not been replaced as original.
7. Removal or alterations of internal features such as doors, cupboards, panelling, and fireplaces.
8. Changes to plan form of internal rooms.
9. Timber treatment where this involves destructive techniques.
10. Plumbing where this has an impact on the listed building.
11. Replacement windows including double-glazing.
12. Insertion of suspended ceilings.
13. Fitting of new ovens and stoves which require new flues.

What if you fail to obtain Listed Buildings Consent

Most people don't realise that it is a criminal offence to alter a building without Listed Building Consent and conviction could result in a fine or even prison sentence for both the owner and builder. Compliance with other controls such as Building Regulations or Public Health does not mean that the work is acceptable from the listed building point of view. The current owner may be forced to carry out remedial works at his/her expense even if the unlawful work was carried out by a previous owner.