

Fact Sheet - Listed Buildings

Knowing more about buying and owning a listed building helps you select some of the prime property on the market and miss some pit falls.

Local Chartered Building Surveyor, Geoffrey Hunt explains what to look out for.

The golden rules of listed buildings

1. All of the building is listed including the interior, exterior and the grounds.
2. You may be deemed responsible for any infringements of previous owners.
3. With listed building consent approval you may be able to alter, change, replace, attach or demolish the fabric of the building. None of these things can be done without consent.
4. The description of the building on the listing is NOT a list of what is listed. This is merely for identification purposes.

Types of listing

A common mistake people (and estate agents) make is that the grading tells you how much of the house is listed THIS IS INCORRECT.

- **Grade I** buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important; only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade 1
- **Grade II*** buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade 2*
- **Grade II** buildings are nationally important and of special interest; 92% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home owner.

What happens if work is undertaken without consent?

- Carrying out unauthorised works to a listed building is a criminal offence and individuals can be prosecuted.
- A planning authority has the authority to insist that all works undertaken without consent are reversed.
- An owner will have trouble selling a property which has not been granted Listed Building Consent for work undertaken.
- Even though a prison term can be imposed this is for extreme cases and has never been given to a person taking on the building.
- The vendor usually has to indemnify the purchaser against any potential infringements if insufficient evidence can be produced of compliance.



What can or can't be done?

It is strongly recommend that you have pre-application discussions with the local authority Conservation Officer in order to check if consent is required. There are no hard and fast rules so don't assume. Your solicitor will advise you on how listed building consent affects the purchase of the house.

Below are typical examples to the question Do I need consent?

- **Repair windows/doors** – No, providing they are carried out in a like-for-like manner but if there are changes in materials, appearance or in some cases colour, consent may be required.
- **Paint the rooms in the house** – Depends on the historic significance of the décor.
- **Improve insulation in the roof space.** No. Be careful to add ventilation as there may be a condensation risk.
- **Replace windows/doors** – Yes, even if the new windows/doors are to be of the exact same design, material and finish. It is possible to argue for double glazing in some cases.
- **Build a conservatory, porch or extension** – Yes if attached to the main building or curtilage buildings. Planning permission may also be required.
- **Erect a shed within the grounds** – No, but planning permission may be required.
- **Install a satellite dish** – Yes, if the dish is to be erected on any part of the building or curtilage buildings. Planning permission may also be required.
- **Repaint the exterior of the property** – Yes, if the building has not been painted before or if the proposed new colour affects the character and appearance of the building.
- **Repair/replace the roof covering** – No, providing the repairs or replacement roof covering are done using **exactly** the same material.
- **Put up a fence, wall or install gates within the curtilage of a listed building** – If the structure is to be attached to the main building or any curtilage building, then Listed Building Consent may be required. Planning permission may also be required.
- **Do I need consent to demolish any structure or building within a Listed Building?** – Yes. Listed Building Consent will be required for any proposed demolition to any part of a Listed Building or any structure within the curtilage.
- **Replace bathroom and kitchen units.** Generally no as long as you do not knock out any walls or change windows.
- **Emergency repairs / leaks broken windows etc.** No but once done you must notify the conservation office.

Note: These notes are for guidance purposes only. Before you proceed to any purchase you must satisfy yourself that all permissions have been granted on alterations.