

Planning & Listed Buildings

The background to listing

A listed building is a building included in the statutory lists compiled by the department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Listing means that the building is protected from unauthorised change. Listing includes any object or structure fixed to the building and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building. The curtilage includes anything which forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948 and is not defined by the ownership of the land or structure.

The list is maintained by English Heritage and can be found on line at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>, it is sub-divided into three classes, Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II. Generally the grade indicates the degree of significance of the building with Grade I the most significant. This means that the degree of protection afforded is higher; alterations or repairs to a Grade I or Grade II* listed building will require the permission of the Secretary of State and would normally only be granted following extensive consultation with Historic England and others. The vast majority of listed buildings are Grade II listed and consultations are held at the local level and decisions are made with reference to local planning policy.

The entry on the list will include a brief description which may include reference to specific features of the building. This is for identification only and should not be taken to mean that other elements are of less importance and can be altered without consent.

As the owner of a listed building you are obligated to look after it and keep it in a reasonable state of repair. If you do not, the Local Authority may step-in and carry out repairs at your expense. It is a criminal offence to carry out works to a listed building without consent, so even for necessary repairs you should consult with the local authority.

Altering a listed building

Listing does not prohibit change; it is possible to alter, extend or even demolish listed buildings as long as it is done with consent within the planning framework. An application for listed building consent needs to be submitted to



the local authority, and also where appropriate an application for planning permission. To be successful you will need your design to respect the characteristics of the building you propose to alter or extend and to demonstrate that there is no significant harm to the character and that there may be significant benefit. Benefit could be the correction of previous inappropriate work, enhancement of particular features or preserving the fabric of the building. You should consult with the local authority conservation team as early as possible; their views will have a significant impact on your design.



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You will find that the conservation team have much more influence on the detailed design of your proposals than the planning team (development control). They can require you to use appropriate materials in any works carried out which may be more expensive than contemporary ones in order to preserve the essential nature of the building. This in turn may mean you will need to find a specialist contractor with experience in working with listed buildings and heritage materials which will mean that your budget will need to reflect additional costs above the norm.

In many cases having a listed building can be to your advantage in the planning process. If the conservation team are supportive of your design then their opinion will be influential with the planning department. Some authorities will allow a conversion to a listed building which preserves the essential features and building fabric where they would not allow it without listing. In other cases it will be a disadvantage; you will not benefit from permitted development rights to convert the use to residential (i.e. an agricultural building to a dwelling), for example, and you may find that the conservation team will not allow proposals which they feel have a negative impact on the significance of the building.

You may also find that works to your listed building do not need to meet all of the requirements of the building regulations, although you should not assume that this will be the case. Consultation with the conservation team will help you understand where avoiding harming the nature of the building takes precedence over the regulations.

Getting help

Acorus can help you with the design of your building and guide you through the consultation with the conservation team as well as the planning team. We will advise you of what may be possible and help you assemble the best team of consultants to achieve it. We can also guide you through building regulations and help you with the building process.



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