

# Listed Buildings

## **A guide for owners and occupiers**

Informal Guidance - April 2020\*

\*Updated to reflect the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy and to make document accessible

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## Listed Buildings in Gravesham

There are over 300 listed buildings in Gravesham. They are an important part of the heritage of both the Borough and the nation. This leaflet explains what listing means and what the implications of listing are for the owners and occupiers of listed buildings.

### What is a listed building?

The Government keeps a list of buildings, monuments, bridges and other structures of special architectural or historic interest. This list is divided into three categories:

- Grade I - buildings or structures of outstanding or exceptional interest and of international importance, for instance, Cobham Hall.
- Grade II\* - Particularly important buildings or structures of more than special interest, for example, the Town Hall, High Street, Gravesend and Gravesend Town Pier
- Grade II - Buildings or structures of special interest. As is the case nationally, the majority of listed buildings in Gravesham are in this category

The main criteria for listing are - architectural interest; historical interest; close historical associations (with nationally important people or events); and group value.

Most buildings on the statutory list were selected in the course of the national re-survey, which began in 1970. Anyone can nominate a building to Historic England for statutory listing, but adequate information must be supplied in the form of photographs, a location plan and historical data.

Only a very small proportion of this country's buildings are listed. In recognition of their importance, listed buildings are subject to special planning controls aimed at preserving their special interest, and they are all protected by law. It is, therefore, an offence to alter a listed building in any way that will affect its special interest unless listed building consent has been obtained.

Buildings are listed in their entirety: there is no such thing as just a listed facade or interior. The listing also extends to structures or objects fixed to the building. It is important to note also that other structures around the listed building could also be listed as curtilage structures if they date from before 1 July 1948.

## How do I know if my building is listed?

When purchasing a property, a solicitor's search will reveal whether the property is listed. You can also check whether a property is listed by visiting Historic England's website.

Historic England's listing sets out:

- The address of the listing,
- when the property was listed,
- description of the building, and
- its history and/or other interest that led to the property being listed.

Historic England welcomes any additional architectural or historical information that owners, local amenity or historical societies may be able to provide on listed buildings.

## Can listed buildings be altered?

Any work that affects the special interest of a listed building (including curtilage structures) requires listed building consent. This includes minor changes such as the addition of an outside soil pipe, replacement windows and doors and internal changes. The following list, although not exhaustive, gives some idea of works that normally require listed building consent:

- extensions and demolitions (including partial demolition)
- repairs not carried out in matching materials
- demolition and rebuilding of important features like chimney stacks
- the cleaning of brickwork, timbers and stonework
- stripping out internal plasterwork (where it is not being replaced as original)
- removal or alteration of original internal features such as doors, cupboards, panelling, fireplaces and staircases
- alterations to the plan form (e.g. by blocking up doorways)
- new plumbing and other services
- alterations to or replacement of windows, and shopfronts, including double glazing and the removal of historic glass
- insertion of suspended ceilings or removal of existing ceilings

- installation of vent pipes and flues
- painting in unsuitable colours or materials
- painting of previously unpainted surfaces, such as brick or stone
- installing aerials, satellite dishes, burglar alarms and other accretions
- installing advertisements, including lighting fittings
- installing canopies, blinds and security shutters
- installing solar panels

In all cases, proposed alterations will be judged against their impact on the special interest of the listed building.

#### Guidelines for alterations

- Contact the planning department before starting any work
- Keep alterations to a minimum and avoid irreversible changes
- Do not alter existing door and window openings
- Retain all architectural features – inside and out
- Keep original windows wherever possible
- Limit extensions to the absolute minimum
- Locate satellite dishes, aerials, burglar alarms and any cabling discreetly

#### **Can I build within the grounds of a listed building?**

As is the case elsewhere, new development within the grounds of a listed building may require planning permission. You will also need planning permission for the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of any gate, fence or wall or other means of enclosure.

Planning permission is also required for the construction of any building or structure within the grounds of a listed building.

Where planning permission is required, the application will be assessed in terms of its impact upon the character and setting of the listed building. Each case must be judged on its individual merits but in general terms, the closer the proposed structure will be to the listed building and the less sympathetic it is with that building in terms of materials, massing and design, the less likelihood there will be that planning permission will be granted.

## **Can I change the use of a listed building?**

A change of use of a listed building may require planning permission. It is important, however, to consider the impact of such a proposal upon the character and appearance of the building at an early stage. Compliance with legislation, such as the Building Regulations, can have quite devastating effects upon the historic fabric of a building. For instance, the conversion of a building to flats will involve both the requirement for sound insulation and fire protection, both of which could result in the loss of important architectural features and alterations to a historic layout. The impact of such proposals should be considered at an early stage, and the prime consideration must be whether the character of the building will change as a result.

## **What about demolition?**

The demolition of a listed building, or the demolition of any part of it (including the removal of fixtures and fittings) or of any curtilage structure, always requires listed building consent, which will normally only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

## **Are there grants available for repairs and enhancements?**

The Council does not have any schemes to assist owners with the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings.

## **What about repairs and maintenance?**

Owners should keep their listed buildings in good repair. As with all buildings, regular maintenance (particularly to roofs and gutters) will avoid costly repairs later.

The Council can serve a Listed Building Repairs Notice requiring the owner of a listed building to carry out repairs. It also has legal powers to carry out urgent works to unoccupied listed buildings or unoccupied parts of listed buildings and to recover the costs incurred from the owners.

## **How do I apply for Listed Building Consent?**

The procedure is similar to that required for planning permission. There is, however, no fee. Find out more about the application process and how to apply online via the [Planning Portal](#)

It is important to note that the Council will expect a high standard of design and drawings. Please refer to the Councils validation list prior to submitting your application. The Council will also expect Building Regulations and other statutory requirements to be incorporated within the proposals at the Listed Building Consent application stage. Where planning permission is also required for works, applications should be submitted at the same time as those for Listed Building Consent.

Any applications that do not meet with the Council's policy requirements will be rejected; therefore, it is recommended that applicants only employ architects or designers who have adequate experience in the field of historic buildings. The [Institute of Historic Building Conservation](#) (IHBC) is the principal body representing professionals and specialists involved in the conservation of historic buildings and their surroundings across the UK.

#### **Contacts for Advice and Information:**

If your building is a listed building, you are advised to consult the Councils Development Management team before undertaking any works to the property. You can reach them by emailing [planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk](mailto:planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk)

For further information on making a listed building application or to seek guidance from the Council on whether or not you need planning permission, please visit [www.gravesham.gov.uk/planning](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/planning)