

## When you decide to buy a Listed Building

**Facts that all prospective purchasers / existing owners should know:**

### What is a Listed Building?

A Listed Building is a building of special Architectural or Historic Interest contained in the lists compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport. Lists are compiled for each Local Authority area in the country, and Rother's lists may be inspected at the Town Hall, Bexhill.

There are three grades of listing; **Grade I & Grade II\*** being buildings of outstanding architectural or historic interest, **Grade II** representing the vast majority of Listed Buildings. In each instance, the entire building is listed – the inside as well as the outside. Also listed is any object or structure fixed to the Listed Building, and any structure built before 1948 within the curtilage of the Listed Building. This includes garages and outbuildings, garden walls and other boundary structures, gates and, in some cases, even brick paths and terraces.

All list entries include a description of the building. However, this is principally to aid identification; the absence of any feature from the list description does not indicate that it may be removed or altered without consent.

### What is Listed Building Consent?

Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition of any Listed Building, or for any alterations or extensions to a Listed Building that affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Building Consent is administered by Rother District Council as the Local Planning Authority, but is a separate process from planning permission or Building Regulations approval.

Examples of works that might need Listed Building Consent are: extensions (including porches, and conservatories), dormer windows and rooflights, most structural work, certain repairs (depending on their scale and nature), external painting and/or cladding where there will be a change in colour and/or materials, installing satellite dishes, replacing doors and/or windows, forming new openings in walls, taking down and rebuilding of chimney stacks, and internal alterations such as the construction of new partitions, new doorways, exposing of fireplaces, stripping / sandblasting beams, re-plastering, re-wiring, installing new heating, loft conversions, or the removal of existing historic fabric including walls, floors (including the levelling of floors), ceilings and staircases.

**NB This list is not exhaustive and the Council encourages Pre-application advice via <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/8842/Pre-application-advice-and-fees>.**

### Offences

Under section 9 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 it is a criminal offence, without consent, to demolish a Listed Building, or to alter or extend such a building in a way that would affect its character. The penalties for this can be heavy, both for the person who carries out the work and for whoever commissions it. In addition, Listed Buildings also have fewer *Permitted Development Rights* (that is work that can be carried out without the need for planning permission) than other buildings.

### Is this the right house for me?

While the listing of a building should not be seen as a bar to all future change, national policy makes clear that there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings in consideration of applications for proposals for alterations. It is therefore crucial that the building you are looking at is appropriate for your likes and needs in terms of size, spaces, and character. For example, a small timber-framed cottage is never going to be a light and airy Georgian house, and similarly quirky mismatched windows, brick floors and undulating plaster walls can often be an essential part of a building's special character.

Also, appropriate conservation-led repairs can be expensive, so the asking price should reflect the building's condition and the skill requirement of any remedial works necessary.

### Specialist Advice

Well-informed care and maintenance of historic buildings is cost effective in the longer term as well as ensuring the retention of the special character of the building. Experienced professional advice should always be sought in any proposal to alter a historic building. Some useful contacts are:

**The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk) offer technical advice on maintaining historic buildings, and publish a series of guidance notes

**English Heritage** [www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

**The Building Conservation Directory** [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com) publishes excellent articles on all aspects of historic building conservation with information on publications and courses, and a directory of products, services and contractors.

**See also the Council's website at** <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/1322/Conservation-design-and-environment>