

# Listed Buildings

## An Owners' Guide



*St Andrew's Church, Frimley Green*



*'leading for tomorrow'*

## Introduction

The Borough of Surrey Heath has a small but interesting selection of historic buildings. Many buildings have been 'listed' in order to protect and preserve them and this leaflet is designed to answer some of the most common questions asked by owners of listed buildings.

It is not intended to be an exhaustive document covering every legal and technical aspect and for more specific advice it is always best to contact the Council's Planning Policy and Conservation Team at an early stage.

## Why are buildings listed?

Historic buildings are part of our communal heritage, both locally and nationally. They provide a unique record of the craftsmanship of earlier generations.

These special buildings are a dwindling resource that cannot be replaced and must therefore be protected for the benefit of future generations. The stock of historic buildings is depleted not just through demolition, but also through neglect and insensitive or excessive alterations. Listing introduces a measure of control by placing special responsibilities on owners and the Local Planning Authority to ensure that buildings are properly maintained and are not altered or demolished without careful consideration through the listed building consent procedure.

## Which buildings are listed and what do the grades mean?

Buildings are selected for inclusion on the list drawn up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (formerly the Department of National Heritage) following the recommendations of English Heritage. They are chosen for a number of reasons, including their architectural style, historical associations, unusual construction methods or their value as part of an attractive group. As a rough rule of thumb, the older the building and the less it has been altered, the more likely it is to be listed. They can be large or small, grand or humble and can also include structures such as milestones, monuments, telephone boxes and village pumps.



*Staff College, Royal Military Academy, Camberley*

A national resurvey was completed in Surrey Heath in 1984, and has led to the statutory listing today of 174 buildings. The majority are listed as Grade II (97%); buildings of particular importance, perhaps with outstanding internal features, are Grade II\* (five listings). Buildings having exceptional interest are listed as Grade I, of which Surrey Heath has only one, the Church of St. Lawrence, Chobham.

The lists are not closed and more buildings will be added as further discoveries are made and perceptions about that which is architecturally or historically valuable change.

## Is my building listed?

When a building is first listed the owner will be officially notified by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and by the District Council. New purchasers of listed buildings will be notified through the Local Authority Search. If you are

unsure whether or not your property is listed you can check by contacting the Planning Policy and Conservation Team on tel. 01276 707245 or alternatively, email [stephanie.hewitt@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.hewitt@surreyheath.gov.uk).

## What does the listing include?

It is a common misconception to believe that the listing only covers the frontage or exterior of a property. In fact, the whole of the building is covered, both inside and out, and this includes any modern extensions physically attached to the building. Internal features such as staircases, fireplaces, panelling and bread ovens are protected as they are an essential part of the building's character. The same level of protection applies to a Grade II building as to one listed as Grade I.



*Brook Place, Bagshot*

Any free standing building or structure within the curtilage since before 1<sup>st</sup> July 1948, is also considered to be part of the listed building. Such structures may include boundary walls, outbuildings, garden ornaments, and the like. The definition of the curtilage of a building is a complex matter but common sense must play a part. In short, the curtilage is land that has had a close and contiguous relationship with the listed building over many years.

The subdivision of part of the curtilage from the building by hedges or fences does not necessarily exclude it from listed building controls.

## Can I alter or extend my listed building?

The listing of a building does not necessarily mean that it must be preserved as a museum piece without any form of alteration or extension to suit modern requirements. However, it is essential that any work which affects the character of the building is only carried out after listed building consent has been obtained from the Borough Council.

Work which affects the character includes alterations to the fabric of the building such as roofs, walls and floors, windows and doors (even if they are modern), and to mouldings. The use of artificial materials such as uPVC, aluminium and plastic is not acceptable, while sealed unit double glazed windows, even in timber, are equally inappropriate. Using traditional styles, materials and construction methods is strongly encouraged. Further detailed guides on windows, doors etc are available.

Listed buildings can sometimes be extended, provided that the addition is sympathetic in design and materials and respect is shown for the scale and form of the original building. However, some buildings cannot accommodate an extension due to their particular architectural design, simple vernacular form or their location. In some cases a smaller extension than originally planned may be the only acceptable solution.

It is always advisable to seek advice from the Council's Planning Policy and Conservation Team if you are considering making alterations to or extending your property. Generally it will be necessary to engage an architect, surveyor or other appropriately qualified building professional with design expertise in historic buildings to draw up a scheme.

## How do I apply for listed building consent?

Application forms for listing building consent are available from Surrey Heath Borough Council and the Council's website (details on the back page). Full and accurate drawings showing the property as it is now and as it would be after the work is completed, along with a supporting statement explaining why the work is considered desirable or necessary, should be submitted as part of the application. Photographs and other supporting material will often also be useful.

Once the application has been received it will be advertised by the Council on site and in the local newspaper. Various interested parties such as immediate neighbours, and the Parish Council will also be consulted. English Heritage and the national amenity societies (The Ancient Monument Society, The Council for British Archaeology, The Georgian Group, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Victorian Society) will be consulted if the application involves substantial or total demolition. The Secretary of State will also be notified once the Local Authority has reached a decision in cases which involve an element of substantial or total demolition and in all cases concerning Grade I or Grade II\* listed buildings.

If consent is granted, the applicant generally has up to five years to commence the work. There is no charge for an application but a fee will be charged for planning permission should it be required. As with all buildings, approval under the Building Regulations may be necessary for works to a listed building. However, it is generally recognised that, if the character of the building is to be preserved, the work may not have to meet the standards expected of new construction. Once again, early discussion with the Building Control Section should result in a scheme that satisfies all parties.

## What about maintenance and repair of my listed building?

There is a fine distinction between maintenance or repair to a listed building and alterations which require listed building consent. The removal of original materials such as lath and plaster, wattle and daub and their replacement with modern alternatives such as expanded metal lath or plasterboard is an alteration requiring consent. The progressive loss of original materials and details in the course of repair work can erode the architectural and historic value of the whole building. The aim should be to engage in a programme of consolidation and repair rather than to carry out wholesale replacement.

Day-to-day repairs and redecoration, except in rare circumstances, are unlikely to require consent. This also applies to works to plumbing, heating and electrical services, provided that the structure of the building and historic details remain untouched. The repainting of the exterior of listed buildings in different colours may require consent, as does the cleaning of brick and stone using abrasive methods.

It is always advisable to check with the Council's Planning Policy and Conservation Team before work commences and repairs and maintenance should only be carried out by builders and craftsmen with proven experience of historic buildings. For instance, it is especially important that traditional lime mortar or plaster is used when repainting or re-rendering historic buildings.

## Is grant aid available?

Depending on the type of work that is being undertaken, the Surrey Historic Buildings Trust may be able to offer grant aid through its 'Small Grants Scheme'. This scheme aims to encourage the restoration or conservation of significant architectural features by offering financial assistance to a maximum of £2000 for an individual project. The Trust can grant aid work to a wide range of architectural features including brickwork, masonry, window glazing bars, paving, gates or railings.

English Heritage operates various grant schemes but demand for its resources is high and is usually restricted to Grade I and Grade II\* buildings.

## Do I have to pay VAT?

Certain alterations for which consent has been obtained are zero rated for VAT. Normal day-to-day works of repair are not exempt. Further advice can be obtained from your local HM Customs and Excise office.

## Can listed buildings be demolished?

The stock of historic buildings is a finite resource and every effort should be made to protect and preserve it. Listed building consent is required to demolish all or part of a listed building and a strong justification will be needed before consent is given, including clear evidence that there is no viable alternative use for the building and no-one is willing to buy the property on the open market.

The unauthorised demolition of a listed building, or even its alteration without consent, is a criminal offence and both national legislation and local plan policies clearly rule out demolition unless all other options have been fully explored and found to be unworkable. All applications for total or substantial demolition are referred to the Secretary of State. If consent is forthcoming, then English Heritage must be given notice and allowed one month to record the building if they wish before work commences.

## Can buildings be added or removed from the list?

Despite the comprehensive surveys of historic buildings that have been carried out it is possible that some eligible properties have been overlooked. The Department is therefore prepared to consider recommendations for buildings to be added to the list, though priority will be given to buildings under threat. The Department also recognises that an increasing number of buildings from the late 19th and 20th centuries are of architectural interest and particularly good examples of modern buildings may now be considered for listing. Requests to delist buildings will also be considered where new evidence can be produced to show that they are not of listable quality.

### Surrey Heath Borough Council Contacts

For further advice on historic buildings: Email – [stephanie.hewitt@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.hewitt@surreyheath.gov.uk) or telephone – 01276 707 245

## Useful Contacts

- **Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
Knoll Road  
Camberley Telephone: 01276 707 100  
GU15 3HD Website: [www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk)
- **Surrey County Council Historic Buildings Officer**  
(Martin Higgins) Telephone: 020 8541 9416
- **Surrey Historic Buildings Trust (grants)** – Telephone: 020 8541 9419
- **English Heritage (South East Region)**  
Eastgate Court  
195 – 205 High Street  
Guildford Telephone: 01483 252000  
GU1 3EH Website: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
- **Department for Culture Media and Sport**  
2–4 Cockspur Street  
London Telephone: 020 7211 6200  
SW1Y 5DH Website: [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)
- **Ancient Monuments Society**  
St. Ann's Vestry Hall  
2 Church Entry  
London Telephone: 020 7236 3934  
EC4V 5HB Website: [www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk](http://www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk)

- **Council for British Archaeology**  
 Bowes Morrell House  
 111 Walmgate Telephone: 01904 671417  
 York YO1 2UA Website: [www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)
- **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings**  
 37 Spital Square  
 London Telephone: 020 7377 1644  
 E1 6DY Website: [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- **The Georgian Group**  
 6 Fitzroy Square  
 London Telephone: 020 7529 8920  
 W1P 6DX Website: [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)
- **The Victorian Society**  
 1 Priory Gardens  
 Bedford Park Telephone: 020 8994 1019  
 London W4 1TT Website: [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)
- **The Twentieth Century Society**  
 70 Cowcross Street  
 London Telephone: 020 7250 3857  
 EC1M 6EJ Website: [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)
- **The Surrey History Centre**  
 Telephone: 01483 594594  
 Website: [www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistoryservice](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistoryservice)