

Listed Buildings

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What is a 'listed building' ?

A "listed building" is one which is acknowledged by the Secretary of State to be of special architectural or historic interest.

In the context of listing, the term 'building' is used very widely and includes not only buildings such as houses, churches, schools and barns, but also walls, tomb stones, milestones, ice houses, bridges and locks, telephone and post boxes.

The responsibility for determining which buildings have special architectural or historic interest falls to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who has a statutory duty to produce a 'list' of such buildings, known as Greenbacks.

There are about 2900 listed buildings in the Vale.

Once listed, a building has special protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant local authority, in this case Aylesbury Vale District Council, has additional powers of protection. Extra responsibilities are also imposed on owners, for example the need to obtain listed building consent for certain works. It is an offence to carry out works to a listed building without consent.



1920s Grade II stone pier inset with a 19th century pillar box at Lower Winchendon



Grade II much repaired witchert wall & attached outbuilding in Haddenham



19th century lock and bridge over the Grand Junction Canal both Grade II

When is a building considered worthy of listing ?

In brief, the following are normally listed :

- All buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition.

17th century timber framed house of high quality. Timber is the most versatile of all historic building materials



- Most buildings of about 1700 to 1840, although some selection is necessary.



18th century house built from local Brill bricks. Brill was the home of the county's brick making industry for many centuries. Its fine bricks can be seen in the town and many surrounding villages.

- Between 1840 and 1914 greater selection is necessary. Only buildings of definite quality and character are listed.

Waddesdon Manor, built 1874 to 1883 in the style of a 16th century French chateau



Image supplied by the National Trust

- To identify the best examples of particular building types, between 1914 and 1939, selected buildings of high quality only are listed.

Pitstone cement works, office built in 1937



- Buildings less than 30 years old are normally only listed if they are of outstanding quality and under threat. Buildings less than 10 years old are not listed.

Principles of Selection

Buildings are listed for their architectural interest, technological innovation, historic interest, close historical association, because they are a good example of their type or for group value. Listed buildings are allocated one of three grades; Grade I, II* or II.

Whilst the grading is taken as an indicator of the relative importance of the building it should not be interpreted that a Grade II listed building is of less value and that the statutory controls do not apply equally.

The broad classification of Grades is as follows :

- Grade I - These are buildings of outstanding national interest (about 2% of listed buildings fall within this category).

Grade I Dinton Church, Norman doorway in the south porch



- Grade II* - These are particularly important buildings of more than special interest (some 4% of the overall total).

Grade II Kings Head Aylesbury, a medieval inn still in its original use*



- Grade II - Includes 94% of all listed buildings, representing a major element in the historic quality of our towns, villages and countryside. These are buildings of special interest.

Grade II c.1835, high quality wickert built villa in Haddenham, the centre of this local earth building material



Whilst the Secretary of State has ultimate responsibility for the list, local authorities, amenity societies, or other bodies or individuals may propose that a building be added to the list. In such cases, the Secretary of State will seek the advice of English Heritage before making a decision.

The extent of the listing

The protection afforded by listing applies to the whole building and includes the interior and any curtilage structure within the grounds (built before 1948) and not, as is often believed, 'only the frontage' or 'only special features'.



Damaged listed interior after unauthorised removal of partition walls, joists, floor boards, wall plaster and fireplace surround

This means that anything fixed to the building will also be included within the listing - such as fireplaces and stacks, lath and plaster, wattle and daub infill panels, doors, windows, staircases, original floors, wall paintings. Within the grounds curtilage structures include boundary walls, gates, statues and all



Late 19th century cast iron fireplace

outbuildings. Every list entry is accompanied by a 'listing description'. This is not intended to be a detailed inventory of the property, but rather a record of key features to enable the building to be identified. Sometimes people believe that it is only those features mentioned in the list description that are listed and need to be retained. This is not the case.

What is listed building consent ?

A listed building must not be demolished, altered or extended in any way that would affect its character as being of special architectural or historic interest, without first obtaining listed building consent from the Local Planning Authority. There is no fee for such an application.

All major repairs, where these involve the replacement of structural elements or historic fabric also need Listed Building Consent.

It is extremely important to understand the nature of listed building control. What may appear to be a relatively minor change could in fact require listed building consent.

For example :

- Additions or extensions, eg. conservatories, porches
- Replacement windows or doors
- Removal of internal walls, stairs, floors
- Removal of fireplaces, built in cupboards and similar fixtures
- Introduction of roof lights
- Replacement of roofing materials, change of thatch type
- Removal or rebuilding of chimney stacks
- Introduction of cladding, eg. weather boarding or rendering
- Repainting of the exterior in some instances
- Removal of any parts of the frame of a timber framed building or of a roof structure
- Underpinning
- Large scale repointing

If in doubt ask your local historic buildings advice officer.

To apply for listed building consent you can download a form and notes to help you apply from

www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/listedbuildingforms

Once an application has been made we will advertise the proposal and will require consultation with local amenity societies and Parish Councils for their views on the proposal. On minor works to listed buildings we make a decision when it has considered all of the representations, and the process is normally completed within eight weeks.

However, approvals for Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings as well as demolitions for all

grades will in addition require consultation with various national amenity bodies and have to be agreed by the Secretary of State so will take longer.

In addition to listed building consent, planning permission and building regulations may have to be applied for.

Can listed buildings be demolished or altered?

The intention of the listing is not to fossilise the building, but to ensure that a proper debate takes place when proposals are put forward. Therefore, demolition or alteration is possible, but there is very obviously a presumption in favour of preservation, and accordingly consent for the partial or total demolition of listed buildings is only likely to be given in very exceptional circumstances.

When considering proposals to demolish, we would have to be satisfied that every effort has been made to continue the existing use or to find a suitable alternative. When considering alterations to a listed building, we need to be satisfied that the special architectural or historic interest of the building would not be affected detrimentally.

What about repairs ?

All buildings need to be repaired from time to time, and where listed buildings are concerned, repair with like for like is preferable to replacement; the dangers of over restoration should be guarded against. Works should be kept to a minimum wherever possible, with incremental repairs being more sympathetic to the building than extensive replacement. This approach can also be more cost effective.



Inappropriate cement mortar repointing has damaged the soft limestone irreversibly

Deterioration of listed buildings

Listed buildings may, for a variety of reasons, fall into disrepair; under such circumstances the Council has special powers.

The Council can serve either a Repairs Notice or an Urgent Works Notice. Either Notice, served on the owner, specifies those works which are considered necessary to protect the building.

Failure to comply with a Repairs Notice can in some circumstances lead to court action, and ultimately to compulsory purchase.

These powers are viewed by the Council as measures of last resort, but it is committed to the conservation of the built environment and is prepared to use such powers where it is necessary to enable the survival and protection of listed buildings.



Before repairs



After repairs with new traditional long-straw roof

Setting of listed buildings

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Authorities to have special regard to preserving the setting of listed buildings.

The setting can include development at some distance, especially if the listed building forms a visually important element in the street scene or countryside.

Development, which affects the setting of a listed building, requires careful appraisal.

Listed buildings and list descriptions for Aylesbury Vale

To find out whether a building is listed and read the list description, visit our web page, Is my building listed or in a conservation area ?

www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/ismybuildinglisted

For an audio or large print version of this leaflet, please phone 01296 585454

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