

Listed Buildings in Northamptonshire

Are you the owner of a Listed Building?

or

Are you thinking of buying a Listed Building?

A guide for owners or potential owners of historic buildings in Northamptonshire with information regarding the general care and maintenance of such properties, especially Listed Buildings.

A Guide for Owners

- *Repair and Maintenance*
- *Alterations*
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- *Finding Out More*
- *Planning Guidance*
- *The Listing of Buildings*
- *Legal Responsibilities*
- *Grants and VAT*
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This guide was produced by Northamptonshire County Council in September 2001 (with minor revisions June 2006). Quotes taken from *Celebrating Local Distinctiveness* (Common Ground), *A Sense of Place* (English Heritage) and *PPG15: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 "Planning & the Historic Environment"*. All the information it contains was believed to be correct at time of publication but please check that it is still valid before starting any Listed Building work.

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*Grade II Listed Building with
Northamptonshire long straw
thatch and a plain flush ridge.
East Northamptonshire*

INTRODUCTION

Being responsible for an historic building is a privilege. It represents a commitment to the nation's heritage and your own contribution to preserving it for future generations to enjoy.

Each historic building is unique, once part of its fabric is destroyed or damaged it can never be genuinely replaced.

The intrinsic value to society of our historic buildings and areas is recognised by the Government, Local Authorities and Heritage Organisations. A legal framework exists to help guide essential change whilst protecting and enhancing the special character of the buildings we value.

*“Your property is unique –
damaged or destroyed
features can never be
authentically replaced.”*



LISTED BUILDINGS

A Listed Building is a property which has been identified as having special architectural or historic interest. It is legally protected through the planning system so as to preserve its special character.

If a building is “listed” the address and a brief description of the building or structure will be included in the Statutory Lists. Copies of these Lists are held by the local District and Borough Councils and at a number of other places (see page 17 – Finding Out More, for more information).

Why are Buildings Listed?

The richness of England's architectural heritage plays an important part in sustaining our sense of place and our sense of identity. The listing of buildings is one way in which this “familiar and cherished local scene” is protected.



*“Historic buildings
are a precious and
finite asset.
They are powerful
reminders to us of
the way of life of
earlier
generations”*

*Grade II Listed Building
with parts dating back to
the 1600s. Built of local
limestone and with a
Collyweston stone roof, a
blend of materials
described by Sir Alec
Clifton-Taylor as “that most
royal of combinations”.*

Kettering District



Typical traditional Northamptonshire casement window with oak lintel and non-projecting sill.

2.8% of Listed Buildings in Northamptonshire are Grade I. The national average is 2%.

5.2% of Listed Buildings in Northamptonshire are Grade II. The national average is 4%.*

92% of Listed Buildings in Northamptonshire are Grade II. The national average is 94%.

How are Listed Buildings chosen?

A building or structure is listed because there is evidence that it is special. It may be special because of its extreme age, rarity, architectural merit, innovation in its construction or materials or by its association with a famous person or event. The "listing" of buildings is done from a national perspective.

The older a building is and the more complete and unchanged it is the more likely it is to be listed. All buildings which date from before 1700 and have survived in something like their original form are listed; this is also true of many of those built between 1700 and 1840.

After that date the process is much more selective. Only very special or rare buildings from the second half of the 19th and the 20th century are listed. Buildings constructed in the last 30 years are only listed if they are exceptionally important and at risk.

Listing legislation currently protects around 500,000 buildings in England. Over 6,000 of these are in Northamptonshire.

Listed Buildings are graded to show their relative historic interest.

Grade I – buildings of exceptional interest e.g. churches, stately homes and country houses.

Grade II* – particularly important buildings of more than special interest.

Grade II – buildings of special interest which warrant every effort to preserve them.

What is Listed?

All of the building identified in the Statutory List is protected - the interior as well as the exterior. It includes all ancillary buildings, structures and boundary walls (*curtilage*) which were in the same ownership at the time of listing and built before July 1948. It also includes any object or structure fixed to the building or forming part of an historic designed decorative scheme.

Many people believe that only the front of a building is normally listed – **this is incorrect.** It is also a commonly held belief that only the details of the building which are specifically mentioned in the listing are protected – this is also untrue. Once included on the Statutory List the **entire** building is protected.

The purpose of listing is to protect the special historic character of a building. All the elements of the building which create that character are therefore included in the legal protection.



19th century cottage within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building.*

Although constructed of machine-made bricks and beaver-tail roof tiles, it still has a charm and character worth preserving.

South Northamptonshire



A Grade II Listed Late Georgian terraced town house.

Northampton



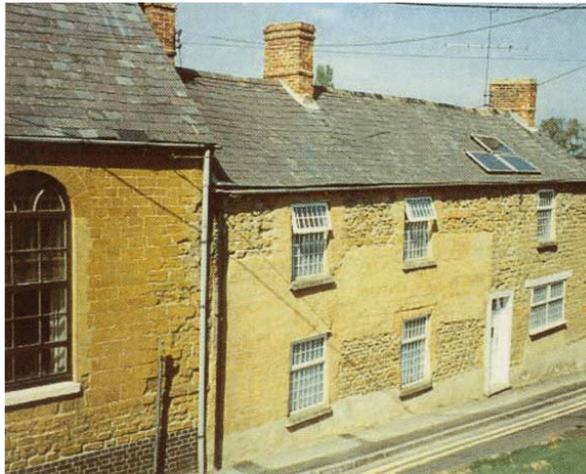
Keeping small features helps retain historic character.

How can I get a building listed, upgraded or de-listed?

Decisions on the listing of buildings rest with Central Government - the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Anyone may make requests for buildings to be considered for listing or a change in their current status.

It is advisable to contact your local Conservation Officer (see Who's Who) first for information on the procedure.

If the building in question is under immediate threat a Building Preservation Notice can be issued by the local Borough or District Council as temporary protection.



A traditional building which has suffered from many inappropriate alterations and repairs over the years. These alterations and repairs have largely destroyed the historic character it once had.

Daventry District

“Old buildings should not be set apart, but woven into the fabric of the living and working community.”

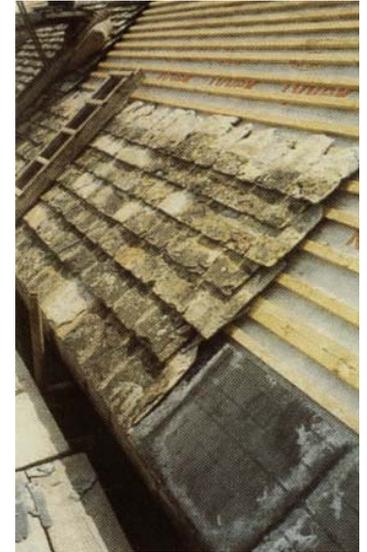
LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Listed Building Consent

If a building is listed extra planning controls apply. Their purpose is to protect the building by ensuring that any alterations or development are appropriate. In this way the long-term future of the building and its setting can be secured, whilst accommodating acceptable and necessary changes.

Consent is required for any demolitions, in whole or in part, and any works of alteration or extension which would affect the building's character, appearance or special architectural or historic interest. The requirement for Listed Building Consent applies to all works – both internal and external – and to all curtilage buildings and structures.

An application for Listed Building Consent is necessary even where alterations are likely to be beneficial. This is to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved. It is always best to discuss your proposals for changes to a Listed Building at an early stage with your local Conservation Officer (see page 19 for contact details).



Repairing a traditional Collyweston stone slate roof. The slates decrease in size from the eaves to the ridge.



Rare survival of a mid 17th century end stop decoration on an oak ceiling beam.

East Northamptonshire

Listing often adds to the value of private houses despite the extra responsibilities.”

“Use old buildings again. Find new functions for them. Accretion is better than demolition.”

Unauthorised Work

If works are carried out to a Listed Building without consent, a Listed Building Enforcement Notice can be issued by the local Borough or District Council. This can require the building to be put back to its former state or the execution of other specified works to alleviate the effects of unauthorised works.

It is a criminal offence to undertake unauthorised works on a Listed Building and so, as well as Enforcement Notices, the penalties imposed for unauthorised work can include fines and imprisonment.

Repair and Upkeep

Owners have a duty to keep their buildings in a good state of repair and it is obviously in their own interest to do so.

Local Planning Authorities have legal powers to take action to protect buildings from intentional damage and neglect. The use of these powers is a last resort – other solutions are usually found through negotiation between the owner and the Local Planning Authority.



Chimney repairs taking place on a Grade II farmhouse.

East Northamptonshire

PLANNING GUIDANCE

Detailed guidance on all aspects of planning and the historic environment is contained in a central government guidance note known as “PPG 15”. Each Local Planning Authority makes its planning decisions based on this national guidance and on its own Local Plan policies and County Structure Plan policies.

Some types of development or changes to Listed Buildings or their settings also require Planning Permission and Building Regulation Approval. Your Local Planning Authority (Borough or District Council) will be able to advise on what permissions are required.

Applications for Listed Building Consent are made separately from applications for Planning Permission on specific forms. The Local Planning Authority will be able to provide guidance on the process of applying for Listed Building Consent. There is no fee payable for obtaining Listed Building Consent.

Once an application has been submitted it will be advertised in the local press and a public notice will be posted on the site by the Local Planning Authority.

Copies of the application are sent to all Statutory Authorities (e.g. English Heritage) and relevant conservation bodies (e.g. The Georgian Group) for comment. Local Planning Authorities aim to make a decision on applications within eight weeks. However the process can sometimes take longer, especially in complex cases.



Fine 18th century window and surround on Grade I Listed Building.

South Northamptonshire



Grade II Listed Building before much needed repairs were undertaken. Wellingborough District

Applicants will be sent a notice informing them of the Local Planning Authority's decision. Permission may be subject to particular conditions which will be stated on the Listed Building Consent form. Conditions may include a requirement to carry out building recording before or during the works.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the decision or consent is refused, it is possible to lodge an appeal.

Appeals are made to the Secretary of State (Department for Communities and Local Government). Appeals must be made within six months of the date of the council's notice of decision. Appeal forms are available from your Local Planning Authority and from the Planning Inspectorate (see page 19 for contact details).

Appeals are intended as a last resort and they take several months to decide. It is often quicker to discuss with the Local Planning Authority whether changes to your proposal would make it more acceptable.



One of the first mass produced prefabricated concrete buildings. 1879-80 by W H. Lascelles in association with R. Norman-Shaw. Grade II. Daventry District

LOOKING AFTER A LISTED BUILDING

Owning an historic or Listed Building should be an enjoyable, or even enviable, experience. The building will only become a liability through lack of care or an unsympathetic approach to repairs and maintenance.

Appropriate and timely maintenance is needed to prevent small problems developing into major repairs. Such maintenance is particularly important for historic buildings as neglect can more quickly result in irreversible damage to or loss of historic fabric.

All buildings need repair at some time. The reason we have historic buildings today is because previous generations have repaired and maintained them over the centuries.

Regular maintenance can endow traditionally constructed buildings with an almost indefinite lifespan. Regular attention to roof coverings, flashings, rainwater goods, drainage and ventilation, along with redecoration to maintain weatherproof paint coatings, is essential.

“Much of the need for capital expenditure on the historic environment is the result of poor maintenance.”



Refurbishment of a Grade II Listed Building. East Northamptonshire



Grade I Listed Orangery – at risk through a lack of maintenance and repair.

Kettering District

Repairs of historic fabric should always be carried out on a strict like-for-like basis, using traditional methods and materials.

Although Listed Building Consent is not normally required for repairs, some repairs will involve some element of alteration: e.g. replacement of windows, which could affect the character of the building.

If this is the case, then consent will be required and failure to obtain this will mean that any work carried out will be regarded as “Unauthorised” (see page 8).

It is advisable to consult your local Conservation Officer before undertaking any repairs or contemplating any alterations (see page 19 for contact details).

“Prevention, not cure ... planned, timely and cost-effective maintenance, not costly last-minute repairs.”



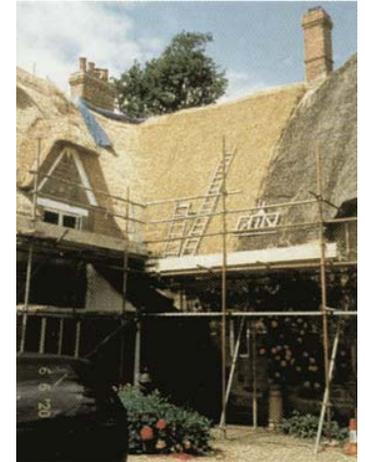
Repair of doors and door casings prior to re-assembly

ALTERATIONS

It is recognised that the use of historic buildings may need to change as our needs change and that some buildings may have undergone many changes already during their history. Most buildings are capable of adaptation to new needs without compromising their essential character.

However, the loss of historically important elements ought to be avoided and any development and significant change should be for the long term good of the building.

Planning legislation recognises the importance of keeping buildings in use to ensure their long term survival. In principle, the aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the character, fabric, interior details and the setting.



Thatch Repairs

The innermost layers of thatch on this building date back to medieval times and are blackened by smoke from the original open hearth.

Daventry District

“The continued use and maintenance of historic buildings is vital. There needs to be a realistic and imaginative approach to change to avoid unnecessary losses.”



Former Post Office in need of sympathetic restoration.

East Northamptonshire



A redundant shoe factory. This historically important building will need a sympathetic new use if it is to survive.

Corby District

“New use is often the key to a building’s preservation.”

If there is evidence that a feature or part of a Listed Building is of little or no architectural or historic value and that it is not making a positive contribution to the building or its history, then its removal or replacement will normally be permitted. However, if the value or nature of a feature is in doubt, investigation will be required to inform any final planning decision.

The average length of ownership of any particular property, in England, is 8 years. This means that alterations to Listed Buildings which are entirely for the convenience or taste of the current owner are unlikely to be approved unless they can be shown to have no adverse affects on the character or special interest of the building.

The sorts of works which are unlikely to be acceptable are:

- re-configuring historic room divisions;
- re-positioning staircases;
- demolishing outbuildings and boundary walls;
- removing chimney breasts or taking down chimney stacks;
- changing floor or ceiling heights;
- replacing traditional doors and windows with modern UPVC versions;
- changing roof materials;
- installing exterior satellite dishes;
- building large or unsympathetic extensions or conservatories.

The re-creation of “historic features’ without good evidence of their former existence is not encouraged.

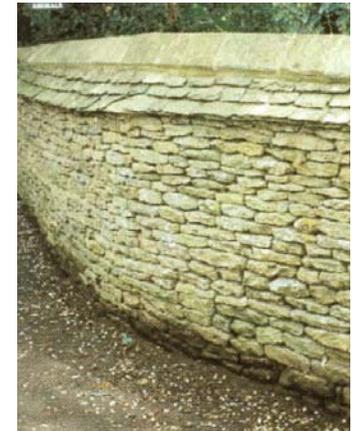
SPECIALIST ADVICE

Irrevocable damage is caused by inappropriate and often unnecessary work on historic buildings carried out on the recommendation of inadequately qualified and experienced people. Good, careful conservation will often involve only work which is strictly necessary to adequately maintain the building, rather than being a wholesale overhaul.

It is usually the case that extra time, care and attention to detail are required when repairing or altering a Listed Building. It is especially important to select suitably experienced professional advisors and skilled craftsmen. Good advice and selecting appropriate craftsmen can save a great deal of time and money in the long term as well as ensuring the future of the property as an asset.

Historic buildings are different from modern buildings. Traditional construction techniques, materials and detailing are often very particular to the specific locality. Skill and knowledge in building or repairing modern buildings does not necessarily equip a builder, surveyor or architect to deal successfully with an historic building.

It is also necessary to ensure that new works meet modern building regulations, especially with regard to the specialised areas of fire protection, structural safety and disabled access. This requires expert guidance to ensure that the building’s special interest is not compromised in the process of change. You should contact your local Borough or District Council Building Control Officers for advice and further information.



A typical Northamptonshire stone wall with coping (top courses) particular to South Northamptonshire, repaired by a local craftsman to retain its distinctive character.

Reveal the geology. Use the brick and stone of the locality. Reinforce the colour, patterns, craftsmanship and work of the place.”



Typical Georgian door on a town house.

With regular care and maintenance this type of feature will last almost indefinitely.

“The historic environment is enjoyed by the whole population yet is created, managed and maintained by a limited number of owners.”

Grants

English Heritage, the County Council and the Local Planning Authorities recognise that maintaining historic buildings can involve higher than average costs, especially if the appropriate level of craftsmanship, expertise and attention to detail are to be achieved.

Therefore there are some grants available to help towards some types of repair costs. However, these funds are always limited and are increasingly targeted towards those buildings in greatest need. For current availability of grants in your area contact your local Borough or District Council (see Who's Who).

VAT

All building repair work (listed or otherwise) is subject to VAT, whilst new building work is not.

Much of the work for which Listed Building Consent is required is not viewed by Customs and Excise as new work. For example – replacing an iron roof with thatch is usually classed as repair to an existing element.

For work to be exempt from VAT, Customs & Excise regulations state that the work must be carried out by a VAT registered builder, listed Building Consent must have been obtained for the work and the work must be “new building” as defined by Customs & Excise – for example the building of an extension.

These are general guidelines only. In specific cases it is advisable to check with the local Customs and Excise office. It is the Building Contractor's responsibility to include VAT charges if they are payable.

FINDING OUT MORE

Listed Building Enquiries

If you want to find out if a building is listed you can consult the Statutory Lists. Lists are held by the local Borough and District Councils, the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record.

The History of your House

If you are interested in finding out more about the history of a building or area there are a number of publications and organisations that may be of use. Please contact the County Council Built & Natural Environment Service for a more detailed information sheet.

Repairs & Restoration of Historic Buildings

If you want to find out about repairing or restoring historic buildings there is a range of publications that may be of interest and a number of courses that can be attended. For more details please contact the County Council Built & Natural Environment Service.

Specialist Advice and Craftsmen

For information about specialist advisors, local craftsmen, specialist builders and suppliers please contact your local Borough or District Council Conservation Officer.



Borough & District Councils

For contact details see page 19.

Northamptonshire County Council

Sites & Monuments Record

P0 Box 163, County Hall
Northampton NN1 1AX
Tel: (01604) 237246
Fax: 01604 236696
Email: heritage@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Built & Natural Environment Service

Tel: 01604 237248
Fax: 01604 236696
Email: heritage@northamptonshire.gov.uk

National Monuments Record

Kemble Drive, Swindon
SN2 2GZ
Tel: 01793 414600
Fax: 01793 414606
Email: info@rchme.co.uk

Repair of a cob (mixture of earth and straw) wall by specialised craftsmen.

South Northamptonshire

