

What is a listed building?

When a building is described as 'listed', it means that it is included on a national list of buildings which are considered to be of sufficient historic or architectural interest to merit special protection.

At present, St.Helens has over 145 listed buildings. They can be found in urban areas and the countryside and range from large mansion houses to cottages, milestones and bridges.

Listed buildings have special protected status under planning law. This leaflet explains how they are chosen and the implications for you, if you are the owner.

Why are buildings listed?

Buildings are listed so that we can identify and protect our architectural heritage. Listing does not suggest that a building must be preserved for all time, rather that care will be taken over decisions affecting its future and any alterations must respect the character and special interest of the building. All of the properties considered for listing are assessed according to a set of national standards. The condition of a building, its alternative uses, or the cost of maintenance



are not matters which affect a building's suitability for 'listing', although these are taken into consideration if an application for demolition is subsequently submitted.

Criteria used in listing

All properties considered for listing are assessed according to the following national criteria:

Architectural interest: The lists are meant to include all buildings which are important to the nation for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship. Also, buildings which are important examples of particular building types and techniques, or which have significant plan forms.

Historic interest: The lists also include buildings which display important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history.

Close historical associations: With nationally important people or events.

Group value: For example, where together, buildings comprise an important architectural or historical entity, or are a fine example of planning.

Age and rarity are also important considerations, particularly where buildings are proposed for listing on the strength of their historic value. Thus, all buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition and form are listed, and most buildings of about 1700 to 1840 are listed, although some selection is necessary. From 1840, only buildings of definite quality and interest are listed, and for the same reasons, post-1914 buildings are only listed if they demonstrate very special qualities. Buildings which are less than 30 years old can only be listed if they are of outstanding quality and are under threat.

Occasionally, buildings are added to the list or their grade is altered when new information on the building becomes available. A building may be 'spot listed' when it is threatened by alteration or demolition, and then immediate consideration is given to listing.



Grades of listed buildings

Listed buildings are graded according to their national importance:

- **Grade I** The finest and most important buildings/structures of exceptional national interest.
- **Grade II*** Buildings of exceptional quality or containing specific features.
- **Grade II** Buildings of specific local interest and significance.



Is a building listed?

The Planning Section at St.Helens Council holds copies of the statutory list and can advise you. Further information can be found on the Council's website, www.sthelens.gov.uk.

Prospective purchasers should be informed in the pre-contract searches. Owners of buildings that are newly listed receive written notification.



The effect of listing

A building or structure is listed in its entirety. There is no such thing as just a listed façade or interior. A building is described in the list but the description is not comprehensive and is for identification purposes only, although sometimes special internal or external features are mentioned.

The listing of a building applies not only to the building but also to any building within its curtilage. The curtilage is the garden or area attached to a house; buildings within it can include outbuildings, barns, stables, farm buildings, walls and gates. Please note that some buildings may have been curtilage buildings at the time of listing but have since been sold into separate ownership. They are still curtilage buildings and protected under the listing.



What if I own a listed building?

Listed Building Consent will be needed if you want to alter, extend or demolish any part of a building or buildings within its curtilage in any way that changes its character. There is no charge for an application for Listed Building Consent. Alterations include not only extensions, additions and demolitions, but also things such as:

- New or replacement windows or doors;
- New roofing materials;
- Rendering or re-rendering;
- New guttering;
- Removal of chimneys, fireplaces, floors or plaster;
- Work to garden walls; and
- Work to curtilage buildings.

Even relatively minor work, such as painting, may affect the character of the building and require consent. It is a criminal offence to carry out work to a listed building without consent, and the owner can be required to reinstate the building to its former state, together with heavy penalties in the form of a large fine or even imprisonment.

Repairs Notices and Urgent Works Notices

If the owner of a listed building allows it to fall into serious disrepair, the Council has powers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to serve a Repairs Notice or an Urgent Works Notice on the owner, requiring him or her to carry out the work at their own expense, or giving the Council the right to do the work themselves and then charge the owner. In extreme cases, the Council can also force the owner to sell them the building at minimum cost. These powers are rarely implemented, but the Council will use them if a listed building is threatened by neglect or wilful damage.

Further advice

Listed buildings are an important part of our national heritage and listed building owners should see themselves as custodians of that heritage. However, the Council is keen to support owners as far as possible with help and guidance, and site visits can usually be arranged with the Conservation Officer to discuss particular problems.

If you have any queries relating to listed buildings, please contact:

Conservation Officer,
St.Helens Council,
Development Plans,
Town Hall, Victoria Square, St.Helens,
Merseyside WA10 1HP
Tel: 01744 671687
Email: planningpolicy@sthelens.gov.uk

An additional guidance leaflet on 'Listed Buildings: A Guide to Alterations and Repairs' is also available.



St.Helens Council offers a translation and interpretation service covering foreign languages, British Sign Language, Braille and audio tape.

For a translation of any St.Helens Council publication, please provide your name and address and the name of the language you require to the Contact Centre, quoting the title and/or reference number of the document.



St.Helens Council

Chief Executive's Department

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General Information

