What is a listed building?

A listed building is a building of 'special architectural or historic interest', included on a statutory list produced by the Department for Culture Media and Sport. To be included in the 'list' buildings have to be judged to be of national importance. There are around 600 listed buildings in Tandridge.

Many are included because of their age (for example, most buildings built before 1700 are listed) but they can also be listed because of their association with well known architects or with significant events in history. They are considered to be the most architecturally important or historic buildings in the country and specific legislation protects them from demolition and changes that might affect their special character.

Owning a listed building is a privilege and a responsibility, and all the implications should be fully considered before buying one.

How do I find out if a building is listed?

Estate agents will usually tell prospective purchasers if a property is listed. However, it is always best to check with Tandridge District Council.

The Council holds a brief description for each listed building which includes its grade (I, II* or II) and will be able to tell you whether or not the property you are interested in is listed.

To find out if a building is listed please telephone 01883 732866. As well as the building itself, other structures and features, such as walls, gates and outbuildings, may also be listed.

Will I be able to alter or extend my property?

The purpose of including buildings on the statutory list is not to stop change and freeze them in time. Listed buildings can be modernised (e.g. new bathrooms, kitchens, central heating), altered and even extended – but any proposal will require extra scrutiny.

An additional form of permission, listed building consent, will be required from the local authority for internal or external works involving alteration, demolition or extension.

Proposals will be judged according to their impact on the special historic or architectural character of the building. No fee is currently charged for these applications.

Because of this extra level of control, you may not always be able to make all the changes you wish to your property. In particular, it may not be possible to extend the property without detrimentally affecting its special character.

If a building is not large enough for your needs, or would require radical internal alterations to meet your specific requirements, you are advised to consider whether it is right for you. Please bear in mind that consent may not be granted for the changes you wish to make.

Are there any other implications?

There is a legal obligation on owners of listed buildings to ensure that they are kept in a good state of repair. They cannot be allowed to fall into disrepair, and the Council can take action if it is concerned about the condition of a building.

Repairs to and general maintenance of listed buildings is also likely to be more costly than for non listed ones as traditional materials need to be used, and in some cases specialist craftspeople who are familiar with the methods required.

Whilst some grant aid (for example from the Surrey Historic Buildings Trust) may be available, this should not be relied upon and would in any case only represent a small percentage of the total cost.
Points to remember…….

♦ Check with the Council to confirm whether or not a building is listed.

♦ Extensions and alterations to listed buildings may not be permitted – think carefully before buying a house that would need substantial alterations to meet your needs.

♦ Be aware that even minor works are likely to require listed building consent.

♦ Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence.

♦ Listed buildings need to be kept in a good state of repair.

♦ Repair and maintenance may require the use of traditional building materials and specialist craftspeople.

Next Steps

If you are considering buying a listed building that you would wish to alter or extend, the Council will be able to advise you as to whether your proposals are likely to be acceptable.

Proposals should be submitted in writing to:

The Director of Planning
Tandridge District Council
Station Road East
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0BT

They should be accompanied by as much illustrative material as possible, including plans and elevations of the existing building and proposed works. Planning permission and building regulations approval may also be required.

Please bear in mind that a response will not be immediate as the Council may need to consult others. Any advice given will be informal and may not guarantee that the necessary consents will be forthcoming. However if permission is subsequently refused you may appeal to the Secretary of State.

You can also speak to the County Conservation Officer, particularly if the building is a Grade 1 or Grade 2* building. Telephone 01483 518758

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