



UNAUTHORISED ALTERATIONS FACT SHEET

Unauthorised alterations are a major concern for listed building owners. Even after many decades, discovering an unauthorized alteration can present a significant financial burden on owners, as well as preventing them from selling their property. Works that are hidden in lofts or basements can be extremely hard to find, leaving many owners uncertain about their property.

THE FACTS

- Many kinds of work on a listed building require consent from the local planning authority. Works carried out without this permission are illegal.
- These unapproved works remain illegal within a property indefinitely, even if a property is bought and sold many times.
- When unapproved works do come to light the present owner is typically required to pay for them to be restored to the original condition, including using original materials.
- This can represent a huge financial burden to an owner, who may have to completely replace a wall or even the whole roof.
- It can be extremely difficult for owners to establish that a property definitely contains no unauthorised works. Even significant surveying can miss previous works, especially old ones.
- Discovering an unapproved work will often prevent an owner from selling the building until it is made good. For owners who are selling because of the high cost of maintenance this can leave them in an untenable financial position.
- There are many cases where owners have had to pay tens of thousands of pounds to repair a work they didn't undertake.

OUR POLICY

We are lobbying for a more common sense system, where owners will not be held responsible for unauthorized applications that are both more than 10 years old and which were made before they took ownership of the building

WHY?

Maintaining a listed building is already extremely expensive. Unauthorised alterations only add to the financial risk, as owners cannot categorically state their building contains no unauthorised work.

Unauthorised alterations can be of any scale, from extremely minor to extremely major, and it is very difficult to quantify the risks involved.

The financial and legal burdens are placed entirely on owners, with little assistance available to help them understand their responsibilities.