



Kent Building Preservation Trust  
144-146 Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5DP

## KBPT factsheet 1

*Sources of Information  
and Advice on Historic Buildings*

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One of the consolations of owning a historic building is that a wide variety of organisations will give help and advice to building owners. This Factsheet looks briefly, and in general terms, at what is available.

### **Local Authorities**

Your district council or unitary authority will normally have a "Conservation Officer" in its Planning Department. His or her role will be to administer the system for approving applications to alter or develop the district's listed and Conservation Area buildings, as well as monitoring the condition of historic buildings which may be at risk from decay. Conservation Officers will usually be prepared to offer informal guidance on historic building problems, and perhaps give some guidance on the selection of builders and building professionals. It will also be to the Conservation Officer that you would apply for any grants from the district council for repair work. Be warned, though – they can be very busy people.

### **English Heritage**

This is a Government "quango" mostly based in London. It advises the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on what buildings should be listed, and will be consulted by the district on applications for demolition and major alterations. It has grant schemes (see below) and may inspect a building before deciding whether to make any grant. EH has specialist historians and technical experts in many fields who can be brought in, but clearly it does not act as a building professional, and will normally expect you to appoint one if EH is grant-aiding any work.

### **Professional Institutions**

All the building professions – architects, surveyors and engineers – have their own professional institutions. These bodies exist to promote and regulate their respective professions, but do not give advice on individual buildings. They will normally, however, be happy to give you a list of members of their profession in your area. A list is in Factsheet 3.

### **Conservation Groups**

There are a number of national voluntary organisations which are concerned with historic buildings. Some of these will either give advice, or publish literature which may be helpful, or put you in touch with a local member. The oldest of these is the Society for the

Protection of Ancient Buildings, and the others are the Ancient Monuments Society, the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society. There is also the Twentieth Century Society. Contact details are in Factsheet 3.

These societies will be consulted by your council if you apply to demolish or make major alterations to your listed building.

### **The World Wide Web**

The World Wide Web, one of the networks accessible via the Internet, has a mass of information on historic building matters all over the world. Please consult Factsheet 5 for the Web sites of some well-known organisations such as English Heritage, and a selection of others worth looking at. This information is usually free.