

# Living in a Conservation Area



A guide for enhancing your property

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# Aim

**This guide is to help explain what a Conservation Area is and how the designation or extension of such affects those who live there. The aim is to provide general guidance and advice on the types of works that normally require planning permission as a result of conservation area status.**

**The ultimate success of Conservation Areas will depend upon the care which individual owners take with maintenance and repair of your properties and in any alterations or extensions that are undertaken. Cumulatively, even small repairs can detract from the special character of an area.**

# Planning Constraints

## What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is defined in section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Conservation Areas are very much part of the familiar and cherished local scene. Every area has its own distinctive character, derived from its landscape, historic development, use, building materials and particular features. The individual buildings, street furniture, open spaces, trees and gardens will all contribute to create the particular character of the area as a whole.

## What are the effects of living in a Conservation Area?

The principle purpose of Conservation Area designation is the official acknowledgement of the special character of an area. This will influence the way in which the Local Planning Authority deals with applications which may effect the Conservation Area.

Conservation Area status does not prevent change from occurring altogether; instead it helps us to manage change in order to preserve the environment for the future. It ensures that new developments do not harm the existing character, by giving additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the loss of trees. New development is required to have a high standard of design.



## Demolition

All buildings or structures over a minimum size may not be demolished, either completely or substantially, without the Council's prior consent. Similarly, property boundaries have a degree of protection from demolition.

This is addition to any application for planning permission required for alterations to gates and walls. There is strong presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the area; the Council will not grant consent until planning permission for the building's replacement has been granted and secured by a building contract.

## Minor Development

In terms of dwelling houses, planning permission is required before making some changes which would sometimes be permitted development outside a Conservation Area, as follows:



- Cladding to the exterior of a house with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles
- Installation/alteration/replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwelling house (where they front a highway and are on the principal elevation).
- Side extensions.
- Rear extensions of more than one storey.
- Roof extensions, including dormer windows.
- Any building or enclosure within the grounds of a house required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling (including swimming pools, garden sheds, garages and summer houses), which is between a side elevation of a dwellinghouse and the property boundary.

# Planning Constraints

In consulting on any application for planning permission or other historic environment consent within the conservation area, the Council will carefully consider the impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

## Satellite Dishes

Planning permission is required to install any satellite dish or other microwave antenna on any wall, roof slope or chimney that faces onto and is visible from a highway. If a dish is found to be acceptable, then care and in locating and installing the equipment discretely will be required in order to protect the special character of the area.



## Solar Panels

The following limits apply to roof and wall mounted solar panels:

- If your property is a listed building installation is likely to require an application for listed building consent, even where planning permission is not needed.
- **Wall mounted only** - if your property is in a conservation area, planning consent is required when panels are to be fitted on the principal or side elevation walls and they are visible from the highway. If panels are to be fitted to a building in your garden or grounds they should not be visible from the highway.

## Advertisements

New signs and advertisements which require consent will be strictly controlled. Proposed advertisements must be properly related to the design of buildings on which they are to be

displayed. All illuminated signs require advertisements; internally illuminated box signs and advertisements fixed above shop fascia level will be resisted.

## Listed Buildings

Conservation areas often contain listed buildings (buildings which have been listed by national government as being of architectural and/or historic interest).

Further restrictions apply in that any material changes to the building, including its interior, boundary walls and exterior curtilage requires Listed Building Consent (LBC). It is therefore advisable to discuss your proposals prior to carrying out any alterations, demolition or development within the boundaries of your property. To find out if your property is listed please contact us. All listing descriptions can be obtained from the Heritage Gateway website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

## Article 4 Directions

Article 4 Directions can be introduced. If one was put into force other works could be brought under planning control for example replacement windows, new roof covering.

## Trees within Conservation Areas

Anyone proposing cut down, damage, prune, top or lop a tree in a conservation area, even one that is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), is required to give 6 weeks notice in writing to the Council prior to carrying out the works.



## Archaeology

Archaeology may lie hidden, either underground or within old buildings. Contact us for more information.

# Guidance & Advice

## Rainwater Goods

Original cast iron rainwater goods, such as gutters on brackets and hoppers are part of the character and appearance of traditional buildings, these are durable, available and should be replaced like for like. Upvc rainwater goods attached to fascia boards have a negative impact on the appearance of a traditional house. Aluminium and zinc are acceptable substitutes.

## Chimneys

The shape, the height and the variety of chimney stacks contribute greatly to the local character and should be retained and repaired.

## Pointing / mortar

Though they appear durable, traditional bricks and stone are vulnerable to decay if exposed to cement mortar. All repointing should be carried out in hydraulic lime mortar of an appropriate strength, coloured by minerals.

## Windows & Doors

Windows and doors are "the eyes and mouths of a building" and any alteration or replacement can significantly alter its character and even its value. Wherever possible the original windows and doors should be retained and repaired in order to maintain the proportions and integrity of the house. The efficiency (thermal insulation and sound proofing) of the windows can be increased through aluminium secondary glazing or (where original windows have been lost) the use of slimline hardwood/steel double glazing). The design of doors should relate to other historic examples in the area, painted in a suitable colour and fitted with ironmongery appropriate to the period of the building.

## Roofs

The roof is one of the most parts of a property. Where possible the original roof material, ridge/hip tiles should be retained or replaced. Imitation slates are a poor substitute in quality and appearance for natural slate and detract from the character of the building.

## Satellite Dishes

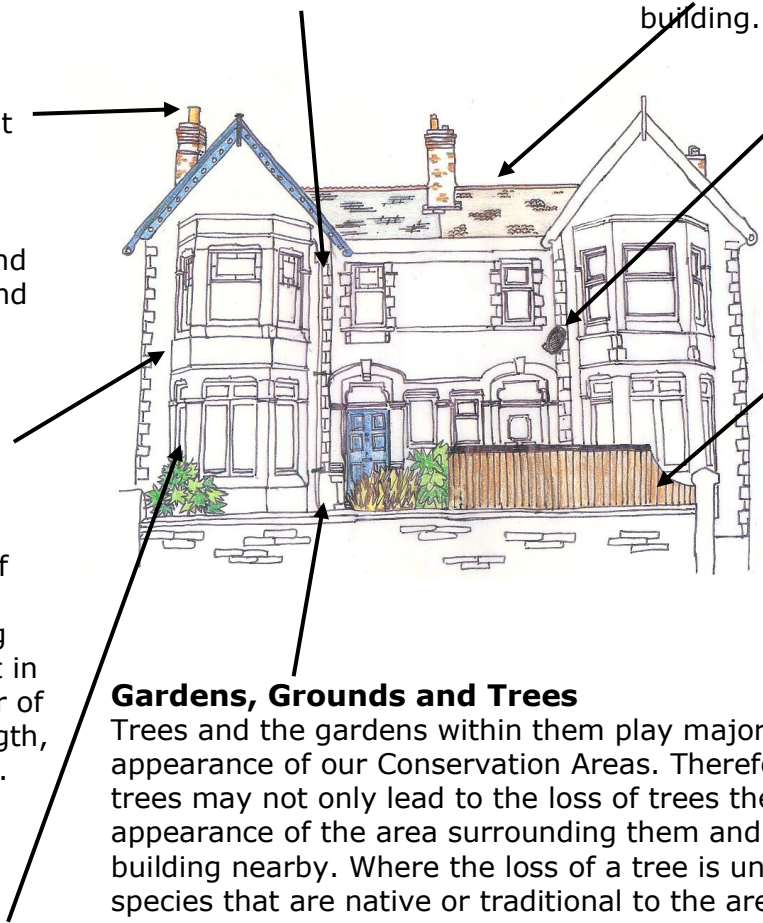
Care and in locating and installing the satellite will be required in order to protect the special character of the area.

## Boundary Treatments

Original boundary treatments, such as walls and copings, railings, gates and hedges play an important role in the character and appearance of a conservation area. They should be retained to the original pattern, as should paths and steps.

## Gardens, Grounds and Trees

Trees and the gardens within them play major element in the character and appearance of our Conservation Areas. Therefore, ill considered works to trees may not only lead to the loss of trees themselves, but also ruin the appearance of the area surrounding them and spoil the setting of any building nearby. Where the loss of a tree is unavoidable, replanting with species that are native or traditional to the area will be encouraged.



# Contacts

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## **Useful Websites**

**Heritage Gateway** - [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)

**Historic England** - <https://historicengland.org.uk>

**HELM:** Historic Environment Local Management - [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

**SPAB:** The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

**IHBC:** Institute of Historic Building Conservation - [www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

The Built Conservation & Urban Design Team provide a range of information and advice to building owners, including details of contractors and suppliers of specialist services and products. Our website [www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/built-conservation/conservation-areas](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/environment-and-planning/built-conservation/conservation-areas) contains links to conservation area appraisals, which assess an area's overall significance.