



*Basingstoke
and Deane*

The Historic Environment



Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance

February 2003

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Planning, Environment and Transport Department



1.0 INTRODUCTION



- 1.1. As part of the Council's environmental stewardship it is vital that there is effective protection of the historic built environment. The physical survivals of the Borough's past are to be protected and valued for their own sake and as part of our cultural heritage.
- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to set out the Council's aims and policies in the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's Conservation Areas. This document should be read in conjunction with the guidance on Listed Buildings and Buildings of Local Interest.

- 1.3. This document was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on 20 February 2003. As such it supports the policies of the Council concerning the historic environment. This document has been prepared in consultation with the general public, specialist conservation bodies and other interested parties. A full list of consultees, copies of their responses and details of the issues raised during consultation is available for inspection by appointment at the Planning, Environment and Transport Department during working hours.
- 1.4. For further advice on this document, or to discuss an issue in more detail, please contact one of the conservation officers in the Environmental Regeneration Team on 01256 845414

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER

- 2.1. A Conservation Area is an area of architectural or historic interest, the character and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.



- 2.2. There are currently 44 Conservation Areas within the Borough. The reasons for the designation of each of these is a combination of architectural and historic features for which the area is notable. Sometimes an area represents the development of a community from the Middle Ages right through to the 20th century, like Overton or Kingsclere, while other Conservation Areas have a much narrower period or area of interest, such as Park Prewett and Brookvale.

- 2.3. Although a number of common features such as red brick, plain clay tiles, timber framing and flint can be seen in many of the Borough's Conservation Areas, it is impossible to give one defining character assessment for all areas of architectural and historic interest in the area. This architectural, social and historical diversity should be reflected in new development and regeneration.
- 2.4. A number of villages in the Borough have prepared Village Design Statements (VDS), which have been formulated by the local community and adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Reference should also be made to these.

2.5. The Council has prepared a Conservation Area Appraisal for each of the Borough's Conservation Areas, and these have been adopted as SPG. These identify the particular characteristics, architectural styles and historical development that must be respected by any new development. Reference to the relevant Appraisal should be made when formulating proposals for new development affecting a Conservation Area, along with the guidance given within this document.

2.6. So what makes up the character and appearance of an area? The guidance produced by English Heritage and the English Historic Towns Forum (see Further Reading later in this document) is very useful in this respect, and the following is an adaptation of that guidance.

APPEARANCE

2.7. Appearance constitutes:

- the physical 'look' of an area;



- how the buildings are grouped together;
- how the groups are linked or divided;
- colours and textures;
- views into, within and out of the area; and
- open spaces and vegetation.



2.8. In appraising an area, as part of a development proposal, one must include an analysis of these factors, and how they shape the appearance of the area. Further guidance is given below on the considerations that need to be taken into account in relation to new development proposals.



2.9. The quality of the Conservation Area will depend heavily on the quality of individual development proposals. A good proposal will take account of the unique mix of features in any Conservation Area. Among the features that can be important to a Conservation Area, are:

- street lighting which should be appropriate to an area's character;
- road and shop signage and other street furniture;
- 'floorscapes' – the type of hard and soft surfacing that characterises an area or parts of an area;

- the type of boundary treatments can be very important by shaping views and spaces. Close-board fencing will rarely be appropriate in historic contexts; and
- architectural detailing is often overlooked, and the appearance of an area can be greatly affected by the gradual loss of defining features such as timber sash or casement windows, decorative bargeboards, plain clay tiling and pitches of roofs.

2.0 CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER

CHARACTER

2.10. Appearance is not the sole factor in determining character. The use of various buildings and spaces plays a large part in determining the overall character of a place. Factors that contribute to the character of an area may include:

- Smells and sounds that typify an area, such as proximity to rivers, open countryside, busy markets, town centres.
- Atmosphere – Also influencing an area's appearance, the layout of buildings, enclosure, or conversely, a wide open space.
- Uses – The use for which buildings and spaces were intended or have adapted to, can be important in shaping the character of an area. The vibrancy and vitality of a town or village centre or the quietness of a village green is fundamentally affected by the use of the surrounding buildings and spaces.



- Hidden features – Many features important to a Conservation Area are hidden from normal views, such as archaeological remains, mediaeval cores of Georgian or Victorian façades, or the pattern of a town's roofscape.

2.11 Historic character can sometimes be relatively intangible, as the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In carrying out changes to a Conservation Area, whether by new build or alteration/extension to a building (whether listed or unlisted), it is important to take account of the effect that this may have on the wider historic character of an area.

- 3.1.** Any development proposals in a Conservation Area will be judged on their effect on the character and appearance of the area as identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 3.2.** Controls in Conservation Areas are not intended to prevent development. The intention is to manage development such that it preserves or enhances the character of the area.
- 3.3.** The following categories of development, which are normally automatically permitted without reference to the Local Planning Authority, require planning permission prior to being carried out within a Conservation Area:
- extensions to dwelling houses that are greater than 10% or 50 cubic metres of the volume of the original building (if you have already extended the house or erected outbuildings this amount will be reduced by the volume of the extensions);

- cladding a dwelling house with stone, artificial stone, timber or plastic tiles (render does not require planning permission unless specifically controlled under an Article 4 Direction);
- the alteration of the roof of a dwelling house which materially alters its shape (this includes the insertion of dormer windows);
- the erection or alterations to a building within the grounds of a dwelling house over 10 cubic metres;
- the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway;
- the erection of satellite dishes over 90cm in any dimension or on a building 15m in height or more;
- an additional dish where there is already a dish on a building;
- the installation of radio masts antennae or radio equipment with a volume over two cubic metres; and



- six weeks notice before any works are undertaken to a tree above a certain size (for further information see Supplementary Planning Guidance: Trees and Development available from the Planning, Environment and Transport Department).
- 3.4.** In addition the Local Planning Authority must publicise any proposals that it considers affect the character of the Conservation Area, including views into or out of the area.
- 3.5.** The Local Planning Authority will not give Outline Planning Permission for development in Conservation Areas. Any proposals for development within Conservation Areas will need to have detailed plans and elevations and show the new development in its setting.

3.0 CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

DEMOLITION IN CONSERVATION AREAS



3.6. Any proposal for demolition of an unlisted building, within a Conservation Area, must be considered very carefully due to the effect that this would have on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Unlisted buildings contribute greatly to the individual character and or appearance of each Conservation Area and their worth should not be underestimated. The Council will not normally grant permission to demolish a building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.



3.7. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires "Conservation Area Consent" to be obtained from the Local planning Authority for the demolition of a building or of almost all of a building within a Conservation Area. For this purpose walls are also considered to be buildings.

3.8. Consent is required for:

- demolition of a building over 115 cubic metres
- demolition of a wall over 1m high fronting a highway, waterway or other open space
- demolition of any wall over 2m high
- demolition of any pre 1914 agricultural building
- demolition of the entire building except its façade

3.9. Where demolition is considered to be acceptable, permission will normally be given only where the contract for carrying out works of redevelopment has been made and planning permission for those works has been granted. Any permission for demolition will be tied to this redevelopment.

ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTIONS

3.10. The character of a Conservation Area can be partly eroded by the loss of traditional details and development, which would not normally require planning permission, within the curtilage of a "dwellinghouse" such as:

- replacement of doors and windows
- removal of chimneys
- the application or removal of render or paint
- erection of porches to the front elevation
- the removal of walls, fences, gates or other means of enclosure



3.11. The Local Authority is able to impose further controls within Conservation Areas in order to protect the character, through the removal of those permitted development rights set out above.

3.12. Imposing an Article 4(2) Direction can bring any or all of these developments within planning control.

3.13. Houses divided into multiple occupancy or flats, together with commercial buildings, have very limited, if any, relevant permitted development rights regardless of whether such a Direction has been made. Article 4 (2) Directions apply only to dwellings in single occupation.

3.14. The Brookvale West Conservation Area in Basingstoke is currently the only Conservation Area within the Borough that has an Article 4(2) Direction in place.

- 4.1.** It is important to remember that the emphasis of control in Conservation Areas is not on preventing new development, but on managing change and encouraging the enhancement of the area. Therefore high quality, well-designed new development may very well be appropriate to a Conservation Area.
- 4.2.** While the advice and guidance given within this document are targeted mainly at those developments within Conservation Areas, it can be adapted to any architecturally or historically sensitive context. Please refer also to other guidance produced by the Council, including, 'Places to Live: Urban Design Guidance for Residential Development', and the adopted 'Countryside Design Summary'.

- 4.3.** New development within a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area. The Council will base its determination of submitted applications on all relevant policies in the Local Plan, this Guidance Note and other relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance (including the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal), and to the guidance given by the Secretary of State, including PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.
- 4.4.** It is impossible to be rigid over what is and isn't appropriate, as Conservation Areas vary greatly in their character and level of sensitivity. What is appropriate in one may well be inappropriate in another. It is therefore important to formulate proposals for new development according to the individual character of the particular area, and to look at the form and style of surrounding buildings and spaces. As each Conservation Area is unique, a thorough understanding of the individual area will be important before submitting any proposal.

- 4.5.** As mentioned in the first section of this document, local distinctiveness is very important, and one must fully understand this both in the context of the whole Conservation Area, and the site and its immediate surroundings, when putting together a development proposal.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 4.6.** There are a number of general principles that can be applied when formulating proposals for new development, as follows:



- Most Conservation Areas display the use of local building materials. The intelligent use of high quality materials that match or are sympathetic with the existing context can make the difference between a good or poor scheme.



- The right approach will sit comfortably in the surrounding environment in terms of the scale, bulk and massing of the existing development. It will also respect the basic form and pattern of existing development.
- Most Conservation Areas feature a number of particularly important buildings, including listed buildings and locally important buildings. The character and appearance of these must be respected and 'referred to' by new development.

4.0 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

- Development should be designed to relate to the geography and topography of the area, through good use of hard and soft landscaping appropriate to the local context.



- New development must respect any important views that are a feature, from within, out of and into the area. The possibility of enhancing these existing views, and even creating new views should be a consideration of every development.

WHICH APPROACH?

4.7. Contrary to popular opinion, a new development does not have to be a 'traditional' design in order to be allowed within a Conservation Area. Indeed, innovative and contemporary modern design, which adds to the

architectural development of an area, and preserves and or enhances its character, can be acceptable.

4.8. To ensure success with either approach, flexibility, intelligence and innovation must be exercised throughout the design process by all parties involved.

4.9. For a traditionally detailed new development to be a success within a Conservation Area, it must be absolutely correct in its detail, and not simply be a standard building with a few traditional motifs added for a token effect.

4.10. The best contemporary schemes in historic areas make full reference to the existing character and appearance of the area, by echoing such features as scale, proportions, rhythm and materials. Many modern materials don't work well in this respect, and a strong emphasis should be placed on the use of appropriate materials.

CONTEXT GUIDING APPROACH

4.11. The right approach to a new development can be found by studying what creates the underlying character of the area.

4.12. As mentioned before, there can be no one single piece of advice, nor should there ever be one prescriptive approach for a particular development. It can however be said that a successful development will have the following attributes:

- a good relationship with the history, geography and topography of the area;
- a comfortable integration into the existing pattern of development in the area;
- preserves and/or enhances important views into, within, and out of an area;
- a respect for the scale and context of nearby buildings and spaces;
- the innovative use of high quality materials that reinforce local identity, and the feel of quality;
- the creation of new views and relationships which add to the variety and texture of the locality; and



- innovative design that injects some 'personality' and 'enjoyment' into the environment.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- What are the crucial elements that create the individual character of the area and site?
- Has the design successfully taken into account the challenges set by this historic context?
- Is the site realistically suited to the intentions of the developer?
- Is there a willingness from all parties to find the right innovative approach?
- Does the development respect important features of the area, such significant buildings and views, and sit well with the existing scale and pattern of development?

4.13. A clear and concise Design Statement, demonstrating how all the above factors have been considered and met, should accompany all development proposals.

SHOPS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

- 5.1. Most Conservation Areas fall within towns or villages and it is important to balance the needs of the Conservation Area and its commercial context.
- 5.2. One way in which both preserving the character of the Conservation Area and encouraging commercial success can be achieved is by ensuring that shopfronts are of a high quality workmanship, design and materials.
- 5.3. All shopfronts are protected and controlled by government planning guidance and legislation, and policies in the Local Plan. There is also a leaflet available from the Council entitled 'Development Control Design Guide 1: Shopfronts and Advertisements' which provides general guidance on appropriate shopfront designs.



- 5.4. This section provides advice on shopfronts specifically located within Conservation Areas, but can also be applied to all historic contexts including listed buildings. The Borough enjoys a wealth of attractive shop units, many of which had their origins in the 19th and 20th centuries. Examples of good design are found in the market towns of Kingsclere, Overton and Whitchurch, as well as the Top of the Town area of Basingstoke.
 - 5.5. In a Conservation Area planning permission is normally required for works which would alter the external appearance of a shop, for example:
 - altering the building line of the shop, i.e. inserting a projecting window or creating a recessed entrance;
 - replacing original window frames with modern equivalents, removing / adding glazing bars;
 - replacing the shop door with one of a different design;

- altering the position of the entrance;
 - installing security shutters;
 - altering the size of the shop window;
 - altering the size of the fascia sign;
 - cladding any part of the shopfront in artificial stone, timber, plastic or tile; and
 - removing or adding a ramp or steps.
- 5.6 Planning permission is required for any of the above. However the repair of a shopfront on a like-for-like basis would not require consent.
 - 5.7. A well-designed shopfront can enhance the commercial attraction of premises as well as contributing to the appearance of the building and its setting. A high standard of shopfront design is expected within Conservation Areas. Proposals will need to reflect the architectural and historic character of the townscape / Conservation Area within which it is located.



LISTED BUILDINGS

- 5.8. Any alteration of a listed building, which affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest requires Listed Building Consent. Please refer to Supplementary Planning Guidance 'The Historic Environment: Listed Buildings' for further information on proposals affecting a listed building.

5.0 SHOPFRONTS

NEW SHOPFRONTS

5.9. New shopfronts for Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings should include traditional elements that blend in with features of the area. Large areas of modern plate glass, overlarge fascias and poor quality materials are not appropriate for historic contexts.



Instead, painted timber or high quality metals, glazing broken up by transoms and mullions and carefully selected scaled lettering should be used. Colour and lighting will also have a great impact on historic towns and should be chosen to preserve or enhance the environment. The conservation officers are happy to discuss any plans for new shopfronts prior to the submission of an application.

SCALE

5.10. As with advertisements and signs it is of great importance that the various elements that make up a shopfront (fascia, windows, pilasters etc.) are of an appropriate scale and are in proportion with each other, the building and the wider townscape and area.

UPPER FLOORS



5.11. The appearance of the whole building is important in a townscape, and neglect of upper floors can detrimentally affect the appearance of the building no matter how good the shopfront below. There is a need to maintain the whole building in a good state of repair as this will provide an additional advertisement for the business. Every effort should be made to use the upper floors in an

economic way; either for uses ancillary to the unit below, or for other businesses or as residential accommodation. The latter is particularly beneficial to an otherwise retail-dominated area, as it reduces the security risk to the retail premises, and increases the vibrancy of an area and provides an awareness of problems caused by poor maintenance eg. a leaking roof.

DEFINITION OF UNITS

5.12. Where individual shops are located in a 'run' or terrace of shops, it is important that these shops are not amalgamated with a loss of divisions between units. The attractiveness of many of our streets is due to the interest provided by individual units. Where more than one unit is used by the same business, the divisions between the individual units should remain clear from the exterior including the fascia and signage.

SECURITY

5.13. Security measures should not be intrusive to either the building or the wider historic environment. External solid or visually intrusive shutters will normally be resisted by the Council, as these greatly detract from the building and the wider environment. In exceptional high risk circumstances, such as jewellers, the Council may consider high quality external shutters that have been designed to fit with the shopfront and maintain the attractiveness of the streetscene.

5.14. The Council will encourage the use of other security features such as security glass, laminating film, invisible reinforcement of transoms and mullions, internal visually permeable shutters, and possibly anti-ram-raid bollards (appropriately designed and located).

5.15. As mentioned before, the Council is keen to see residential use of upper floors in retail areas in order to reduce security risk, and to broaden the use of an area. Proposals for new shopfronts should retain existing separate access to upper floors so as to encourage their active re-use.

6.1. Often the success and prosperity of commercial centres is partly due to the quality of the historic environment within which they are set. It is therefore just as important to the continuing success of local businesses, as it is to the historic environment, that signs and advertisements are carefully controlled. An abundance of poor signs and advertisements will clutter and detract from an area.

The Council will therefore seek to manage signs and advertisements, recognising that businesses need to continue to attract customers, whilst being sensitive to the needs of the historic environment.



ADVERTISEMENT CONTROL

- 6.2.** Signs and advertisements that may not normally require consent may need an application when being considered within a Conservation Area. It is therefore important that, when considering the erection of any advertisements or sign within a Conservation Area, advice is initially sought from the duty planning officer to determine whether consent is required.
- 6.3.** When considering what signage might be relevant for your business, some general design advice is provided in the Council's Booklet entitled 'Development Control Design Guide 1, Shop fronts and Advertisements.' More specific advice relating to Conservation Areas is provided below.

MATERIALS



6.4. Traditional materials will nearly always be the most appropriate method of display in Conservation Areas. These may include hand-painted wooden or iron signs that are in keeping with the related building and locality. Modern plastics and laminates will rarely have a place in an historic area, although the Council will assess the merits of higher quality modern materials if proposed. Similarly, materials of an excessively reflective nature are unlikely to be acceptable.

SIZE AND SCALE OF SIGNAGE



6.5. The size and proportion of signs and advertisements should take account of the size and scale of surrounding buildings and open areas. As well as creating a well-designed sign in itself, the display should enhance the appearance of the building it relates to, as well as the wider Conservation Area. Displays which are not sympathetic to the building, or which do not enhance the Conservation Area will not be permitted.



6.0 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

TYPE OF ADVERTISEMENT

6.6. There is a wide range of advertisements that would be acceptable in sensitive historic locations. These styles may include hanging or swing signs attached to a building at fascia level, fascia signs or traditional 'A' boards (positioned close to the building and not blocking a public highway). Bulky box signs which may project from the front of the building rarely have a place in Conservation Areas and will be resisted.

NUMBER OF SIGNS/ ADVERTISEMENTS

6.7. There is often a tendency to have too many signs in one location or to put too much information on individual advertisements. This can cause the area or building to become cluttered and unattractive. Proposals that are excessive or which involve the repetition of symbols or wording will be resisted.

LIGHTING

6.8. Poorly designed lighting can have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas after dark. Any external lighting should be discreet and designed to minimise light pollution. A high level of spotlighting or floodlighting is unlikely to be acceptable. Careful consideration will need to be given to the location, design and fitting of any lighting apparatus. Flashing, intermittent or fluorescent lighting is unlikely to be acceptable in Conservation Areas, as are internally lit box signs.

ADVANCE SIGNS

6.9. Advance signs can be appropriate in certain circumstances in some rural areas for example, adjacent to the roadside, advertising a farm shop, garden centre or other local facility. It is the responsibility of the applicant to justify why such signage is necessary. If the Council considers that such advertisement is necessary, the signs should be made of sympathetic materials. A display made of reflective or non-traditional material, or which is over-bright would be unsightly in a rural Conservation Area and will be resisted. Normally a maximum of two advance signs will be permitted. It is highly unlikely that the illumination of such signs will be permitted.

CORPORATE ADVERTISING

6.10. Large businesses often have standard lettering and advertisements associated with them, many of which are unsuitable for Conservation Areas. An alternative design, style or material will be required if the originally proposed advertisement is considered to be detrimental to the character of the area or building.

HIGHWAY SIGNAGE

- 6.11. Conservation Areas are "areas of special interest" under the Roads and Street Works Act 1991.
- 6.12. Highway signage need not be intrusive to the historic environment, and with a little effort and consideration can be designed and placed with sympathy to local architectural and historic sensitivities.
- 6.13. Any proposals for new highway signage, textured/coloured road surfacing, traffic re-routing, parking alterations or any general traffic control measures should be discussed in full with Conservation Officers at the design stage.



7.1. English Heritage compiles a Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England. The main purpose of the Register is to identify and draw attention to the best historic parks and gardens and in so doing to encourage their maintenance and protection. Sites included in the Register are graded as follows: sites of exceptional interest are assessed as Grade I, those of great historic interest as Grade II* and those of special historic interest as Grade II.

7.2. Currently the Register provides no statutory protection, nor does it imply any additional powers to control development or work to such sites, beyond the normal planning powers. However the interest of a park or garden is established as a material planning consideration and its status must be considered in any development proposals. A schedule of listed sites within the Borough is available from the Council.

7.3. In addition to the register compiled by English Heritage, Hampshire County Council has compiled its own Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, which lists all such areas which are considered to be of importance within the County. This is available from the County Council.

7.4. The Council will normally refuse planning permission for any development that would be detrimental to the special interest of a Registered landscape, park or garden.

7.5. In terms of the wider historic landscape there are vast tracts of land that are important to the cultural heritage of the Borough. The Council will seek advice on any landscapes that appear to be of historic merit. Any proposals for development relating to a historic landscape will need to be carefully prepared to take into account the wider interest of that landscape.

7.6. A comprehensive assessment of the landscape in the Borough was produced in June 2001. For further advice and information on this and other landscape issues, please contact the Landscape or Conservation Officers.

8.0 FURTHER READING

- Building in Context: New Development in Historic Areas

English Heritage / CABE 2002

- By Design

DETR / CABE 2000

- Conservation Area Practice

English Heritage 1995

- Conservation Area Management – A Practical Guide

English Historic Towns Forum 1998

- Places to Live: Urban Design Guidance for Residential Development

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council 2002

- PPG15 – Planning & the Historic Environment

DETR 1995

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GLOSSARY

ARTICLE 4 (2) DIRECTION:

Additional planning tool removing Permitted Development Rights from buildings/areas (to ensure the retention of traditional details)

architectural pretensions-such as farm buildings and country cottages

BARGEBOARDS:

The inclined projecting boards placed at the gable of the building covering the ends of the horizontal timbers

CASEMENT:

A frame enclosing part of the glazing of a window with hinges to open and shut it

FENESTRATION:

The arrangement of windows in a façade

PILASTERS:

A rectangular projection attached to a wall that is similar in profile to the column of one of the orders

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS:

Development that does not require planning permission

SASH:

A frame for holding the glass in a window plus capable of being raised plus lowered in vertical grooves

VERNACULAR:

A term used to describe local, regional, traditional building forms and types using indigenous materials and without grand



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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