

CONSERVATION AREAS: A guide for owners and occupiers

What is a conservation area?

Local authorities have a duty under Section 69 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* to designate as conservation areas those 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Lancaster District has 39 conservation areas, which range from large, historic urban centres to small, rural villages. These are listed at the end of this document.

What is the effect of designating a conservation area?

Once the local authority has designated a conservation area, they have a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas. The first step involves defining the area's special interest in a conservation area appraisal (CAA). The CAA can then provide a basis for the development of management proposals for the area, usually in the form of a conservation management plan (CMP). Lancaster Castle and Quay and Morecambe Conservation Area currently have CMPs. CAAs are being prepared as part of a rolling programme for those areas which do not already have CAAs and for those which require re-appraising.

In addition to the Council's role as steward of the historic environment, those who live or work in a conservation area should also be aware of the special character of the area and take measures to ensure that that character is maintained.

In exercising its planning functions, the local authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. A number of statutory provisions, aimed at assisting the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area, exist:

- Conservation area consent for demolition

Consent is required from the local authority for the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas. In deciding such cases, there will be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

- Six weeks notice is required before any works are undertaken to trees

Trees are valued features of many conservation areas. Therefore, anyone proposing to prune, lop, top or remove a tree with a trunk diameter of 75mm measured at 1.5m above ground level within a conservation area, must give the local authority written notification six weeks prior to beginning those works.

If you are intending to carry out such works, the relevant notification of intention of works to trees form should be completed and submitted. This can be found on the Council's website:

www.lancaster.gov.uk/Documents/Planning/TreeConservationAreaForm.doc

The Council's Tree Protection Officer can provide further guidance: 01524 582384.

- Normal permitted development is restricted in conservation areas

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 requires that planning permission be sought for certain types of development in conservation areas, which elsewhere are classified as permitted development. For example, various types of exterior cladding, the insertion of dormer windows, the erection of a satellite dish on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto, and is visible from, a highway or on a building which exceeds 15m in height. In addition, the size of house extensions that may be carried out without planning permission is reduced. It is advisable to contact the local authority for further advice before undertaking any work in a conservation area.

- New development in conservation areas

A high standard of design is expected within a conservation area and new buildings, including extensions, should preserve and/or enhance the existing character or appearance of the conservation area. New buildings should be carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials.

- Special consideration given to advertisements within a conservation area

Because of the special interest of most conservation areas, certain categories of 'deemed consent' advertisements, which may have a significant visual impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area may not be permitted. Lancaster City Council has produced design guidance for shop fronts in town centres, which encourage high quality and sensitive design solutions. These are available from the Council's website: www.lancaster.gov.uk

- Additional controls

The Council can introduce an Article 4 Direction to remove further classes of permitted development in conservation areas. Article 4 Directions can be introduced to protect the key elements of conservation areas by making it necessary to apply for planning permission to remove or alter those features. For example,

replacement doors and windows, painting of the exterior of a building or alterations to boundary walls may require permission under an Article 4 Direction. Article 4 Directions have been introduced to certain properties within the following conservation areas:

Glasson Village
Heysham
Morecambe
Bath Mills
Westfield Memorial Village
Lancaster: Castle
City Centre

All owners of properties affected by Article 4 Directions will have been notified when this additional planning control was introduced.

Consideration of planning applications

The main purpose of designating conservation areas is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of these special areas. This is not only intended to improve the appearance and condition of buildings within conservation areas but also to protect open spaces, landscape and the wider setting of the conservation area from neglect and the harmful effects of unsympathetic alterations or development.

Change within a conservation area is inevitable. The Council does not seek to prevent this, but simply to manage it in a way which is beneficial to the character and appearance of the area. Conservation areas should be the focus of environmental enhancements and high quality new developments which respect the existing character of the area by paying special attention to materials, colours, textures and finishes. Conservation areas should be attractive and vibrant places in which to live and work.

The following areas within the Lancaster District have been designated as conservation areas:

Heysham	Wrayton
Warton	Wray
Hornby	Sunderland Point
Over Kellet	Halton
Priest Hutton	Brookhouse
Borwick	Overton
Dolphinholme	Whittington
Glasson Dock	Bolton-le-Sands
Yealand Conyers & Redmayne	Bath Mills, Lancaster
Gressingham	Williamson Park, Lancaster
Wennington	Moor Lane Mills, Lancaster
Melling	Lancaster Castle
Arkholme	Lancaster City Centre
Cantsfield	Greaves Road, Lancaster
Nether Kellet	West End, Morecambe
Slyne-with-Hest	Aldcliffe Road, Lancaster

Tunstall
Nether Burrow
Ireby
Carnforth

Westfield Memorial Village, Lancaster
Morecambe
Cannon Hill, Lancaster

The conservation area boundaries can be viewed on MARIO (Maps and Related Information Online): <http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/>

For further information please contact the Conservation Team on 01524 582340 or 582535 or planningpolicy@lancaster.gov.uk

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