

Living in a Conservation Area

Roofs

The roof is one of the most important parts of a property as it makes the building wind and watertight and can bring harmony to a townscape. Where possible, the original roof material (such as natural slate), ridge-tiles and hip-tiles should be retained and repaired, or replaced on a like-for-like basis. Imitation slates are a poor substitute in quality and appearance for natural slate and detract from the character of a building.

Dormer Windows and Rooflights

The conversion of loft space and the installation of inappropriate dormer windows and/or rooflights have a negative impact on the appearance of a building and detract from the character of a roofscape. In some areas dormer windows may be acceptable, but they must be of a modest size, have pitched roofs and be built in traditional materials and designs. Rooflights should be a "conservation style" in design, materials and size.



Masonry, Brickwork and Pointing

When repairing a building in a conservation area the original character of masonry and/or brickwork walls should be maintained by paying particular attention to the size, shape, colour and surface texture of the bricks or masonry or style of pointing.

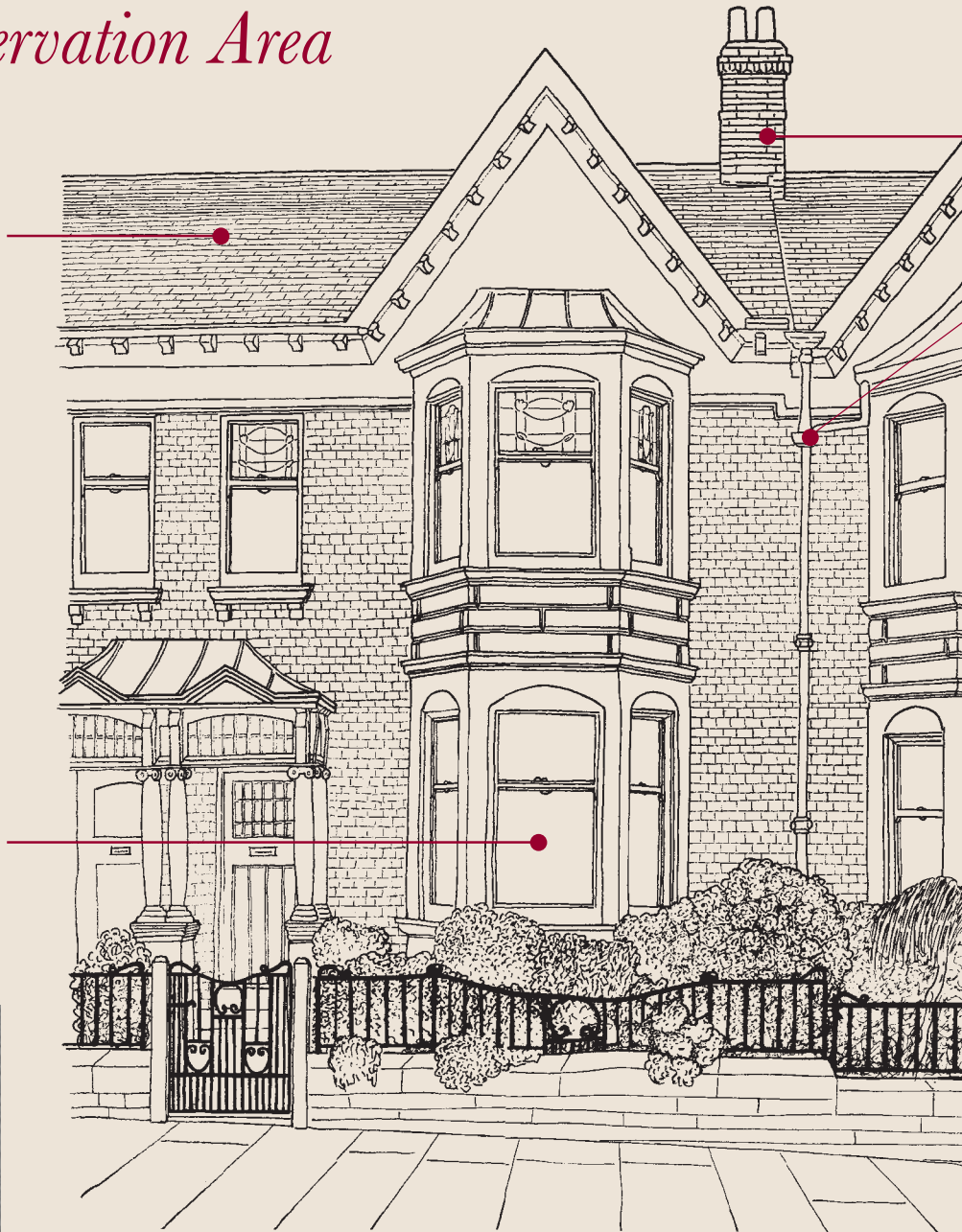
Windows and Doors

Windows and doors are important components of a building and any alteration or replacement can significantly alter the character and appearance of a house. Wherever possible the original windows and doors should be retained and repaired in order to keep the integrity of the original design so preserving the character and proportions of the house. The efficiency (thermal capacity and soundproofing) of the windows can be increased through the use of appropriate secondary glazing.

Imitation replacement window styles and inappropriate replacement window materials (such as UPVC) are poor alternatives for traditional single-pane, timber; vertical sliding sash windows. Mock sliding sash windows generally have heavy top-opening casements for the opening section, while UPVC windows have thicker, cruder frames than timber windows. These unsuitable styles and materials impact on the proportions and overall appearance of a window and a building. The character of a house is then changed, which has a detrimental impact on the overall appearance of a townscape and a conservation area.



Poor quality imitation sliding sash UPVC windows



This Edwardian House is typical of those found in many of the designated conservation areas around Darlington. This house has retained all of its original features, roof covering, chimney stack with pots, windows, door, rainwater goods etc. The elevations have not been altered for example the stone dressings to the bay have not been painted or cleaned. This has retained the integrity of the building and it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Chimney Stacks and other Architectural Details

The shape, height and variety of chimney stacks and other architectural details on buildings in a conservation area contribute greatly to the local character and should be retained and repaired.

Rainwater Goods

Original cast iron rainwater goods, such as gutters on brackets, downcomers and hoppers contribute to the character and appearance of buildings in a conservation area. UPVC rainwater goods attached to fascia boards have a negative impact on the appearance of a traditional house. Where possible original rainwater goods should be retained and repaired, or replaced on a like-for-like basis.

Colour and Painting

The architectural unity of a conservation area, in whole or part, may depend on the use of specific colours for the decoration of external rendered walls, joinery or railings. Therefore original colour schemes should be retained. Walls and stone detailing which have traditionally not been painted should remain unpainted.

Aerials, Satellite Dishes and Alarm Boxes

Aerials, satellite dishes and alarm boxes can have a detrimental impact on the appearance of a building. Where possible they should be situated inside or to the rear of a property or carefully located to minimise the impact on the character of the building.

Gardens, Grounds and Trees

The original pattern of gardens and grounds and the presence of trees can contribute greatly to the character of a conservation area and should be retained.

Boundary Treatments

Original boundary treatments, such as walls, railings and hedges play an important part in the character and appearance of a conservation area and should be retained and maintained or reinstated where possible. Where reinstated or replaced, original walls and railings should be replicated in terms of material, proportions and design.



Boundary treatments are an important feature of a building

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS

1. New Buildings

All new buildings in a conservation area should be designed with reference to their surroundings and their impact on character and appearance of the area. Special attention should be paid to form, height, bulk, materials (style and colour), proportions of openings and detailing of roofs, windows and doors.

2. Alterations and Extensions

These should not dominate an existing building's scale or alter the composition of its main elevations. Any alterations, including partial demolition, should respect an existing building and its materials. All new work should complement the old in quality, texture and colour as well as method of construction. Artificial wall claddings and coatings or artificial roof slates will not generally be allowed on any elevation. No more than one externally mounted alarm box will be allowed on an elevation and this should be unobtrusive in both location and colour.

3. Materials

In certain circumstances planning permission will include conditions to ensure that traditional materials, appropriate to a particular building or site, are used.

4. Colour and Painting

The architectural unity of a conservation area, in whole or part, may depend on the use of specific colours for the decoration of external rendered walls, joinery or railings. It is important, therefore that original colour schemes are retained. Walls and stone detailing which have traditionally not been painted should remain unpainted.

5. Gardens, Grounds and Trees

The sub-division, or further sub-division, of gardens and grounds will not normally be encouraged as this can erode a conservation area's intrinsic character and result in the loss of trees. There will be a general presumption against any development, which would directly or indirectly lead to the loss of trees, hedges and shrubs contributing to a conservation area's character either now or in the future. However, management measures essential for the long-term health of trees will be permitted.

6. Boundary Treatments

The retention, repair and extension of substantial stone and/or brick boundary walls and railings will be encouraged and sought in new developments where appropriate. Where reinstated or replaced, original walls and railings should be replicated in terms of material, proportions and design.

7. Advertisements

All advertisements within a conservation area should be sympathetic to its historic character. New advertisement displays will be strictly controlled and the removal of inappropriate signs pursued. There will be a presumption against internally illuminated projecting fascia signs and advertising above ground floor level. Advertisement hoardings of any description will not be appropriate.

8. Undoing Damage

The Council will use opportunities created through planning applications or other proposals to negotiate improvements which remove unsympathetic alterations or additions from existing buildings and which secure the proper repair or restoration of buildings, other structures and the landscape.

9. Listed Buildings

Many buildings in conservation areas will be "listed buildings", these are buildings of "special architectural or historic interest". Any demolition or alteration to the **outside or inside** of a listed building which affect its "special interest" will require listed building consent, and very high standards of repair and workmanship. For more information please contact the Council's Planning Services Section.



PLEASE OPEN OUT THIS LEAFLET
TO SEE THESE GUIDELINES ILLUSTRATED

SPECIAL PLANNING PROCEDURES WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS

The Council has a duty to only allow developments in a conservation area that "preserve or enhance its character or appearance". Demolitions, alterations, extensions and other works affecting the character or appearance of properties in a conservation area will probably require planning permission or conservation area consent.

It is always advisable to discuss any proposals within a conservation area with the Council's Planning Department at the earliest opportunity.

Development within Conservation Areas

If you live in a flat in a conservation area, you will need planning permission to extend your property. Planning permission will also be needed for alterations to your flat which would materially alter the appearance of the building, for example the installation of roof lights. If you live in a house or bungalow in a conservation area, planning permission is always required in the following circumstances:

- If the cubic capacity of the "original house" would be increased by more than 50 cubic metres or 10% whichever is the greater.
The term "original house" means that it was first built, or as it stood on 1st July, 1948 (if it was built before that date). Please note that any additional building, over 10 cubic metres in volume, in your garden (for example a garage or shed) is treated as an extension to the house and therefore counts against the volume allowance.
- If you want to extend your property nearer to any highway than the nearest part of the "original house", unless after it was built, there would be at least 20m between the extension and the highway. This does not apply to porches, as there are special rules for them. The term highway used here includes all roads, footpaths, byways and bridleways if they are public rights of way.
- If more than half the area of land around the "original house" would be covered by additions or other extensions.
- If the extension would be higher than the highest part of the roof of the "original house".
- If any part of the extension would be more than 4m high and within 2m of the boundary of your property.
- The erection of a building or enclosure within the garden, incidental to the enjoyment of the house, with a volume of over 10 cubic metres.
- Enlargements and alterations such as dormer windows whether on the front or other roof slopes.
- The cladding of any part of the exterior of a dwelling house with stone, artificial stone, brick, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- The installation of a satellite dish or large aerial array on a chimney of a building which exceeds 15m in height or on a wall or roof slope which fronts a highway.

The Council may in certain circumstances issue an **Article 4 Direction**, generally subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, which removes permitted development rights. These are the rights that people have to extend or alter their house or bungalow without first obtaining planning permission. If these rights were removed, planning permission would then be needed for specific minor developments (which otherwise may not need permission) such as the replacement of windows or alterations to boundary walls. For more information please contact the Council's Planning Services Section.

Works to Trees

You must give the Council six weeks notice in writing before felling or cutting back any tree of 310mm diameter or greater in a conservation area, even if it is not specifically protected by a tree preservation order. In giving notice you should specify precisely what works you wish to carry out. For more information please contact the Council's Planning Services Section.

Demolition

You may need conservation area consent to totally or substantially demolish most buildings within a conservation area where the area involved is greater than 115 cubic metres. There are a few exceptions. For more information please contact the Council's Planning Services Section.

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Advertisements

Additional planning procedures apply to the display of advertisements within a conservation area. In particular prohibiting the use of advertising hoardings around building sites and the use of captive balloons for advertising. For more information please contact the Council's Planning Services Section.

Enforcement

The failure to comply with any of the special planning procedures listed above could lead to enforcement action or prosecution by the Council. So it is advisable to consult the Council's Planning Services Section before proceeding with any works which might affect the character and appearance of a conservation area.

For further information please contact:-
Darlington Borough Council
Planning Services Section
The Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Conservation Officer: 01325 388604
Email: planning.enquiries@darlington.gov.uk



The information contained within this leaflet is correct at time of printing (May 2006). However, it is always advisable to check with the Council's Planning Department in case there have been any subsequent legal or other changes.

Living in a Conservation Area A Guide for Residents

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

It's an area of a city, town or village of "special architectural or historic interest", the character or appearance of which merits protection or enhancement.

While buildings, both listed and unlisted, make a large contribution to an area's distinctive character or appearance and usually form the basis of a conservation area, designation recognises that buildings do not exist in isolation but are part of a larger whole. The historic layout of roads and paths, characteristic building and paving materials, public and private spaces, greens and trees and the different uses of a building all contribute to the charm and look of a historic area.

The designation of a conservation area by the Council introduces additional planning procedures that are intended to make sure that any alterations do not detract from an area's character and appearance and to conserve and improve those qualities that make up the "special interest" of an area.

The designation of an area aims to guide, not prevent, change

IS MY PROPERTY IN A CONSERVATION AREA?

If you buy a property that is located in a conservation area it will be identified through your search of the Local Land Charges Register. When a new conservation area is designated the Council places a formal notice in the local press. To check if your house is within a conservation area please contact the Council's Planning Services Section at: planning.enquiries@darlington.gov.uk. Maps of all 16 Conservation Areas can be viewed at Town Hall Reception, and are available on Darlington Borough Council's website by going to www.darlington.gov/planning

