



A guide for owners and occupiers of properties in conservation areas



Waveney District Council
Serving the Community

What are conservation areas?



The historic environment is all around us in the form of buildings, landscapes, archaeology and historic areas. It is a precious and irreplaceable asset; once gone it is gone forever. Conservation areas were introduced in 1967 as a way of managing change within the historic environment, requiring consent from the local planning authority to carry out certain works. They are an essential tool in the preservation of our built heritage and, at the time of writing, there are sixteen conservation areas in the Waveney district.

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest that it is desirable to preserve or enhance, as defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Once an area has been designated by the local planning authority, this introduces certain controls and restrictions on development, and includes alterations to properties.

The local planning authority is now obliged to carry out regular reviews of

these areas. These studies, known as 'conservation area appraisals', will be published in digital format. It is planned to update them on a five year cycle so that impact of development change can be addressed. The public is involved, to ensure that the appraisals reflect community aspirations and not simply those of the planning authority.

Once published, conservation area appraisals will provide the local planning authority with the basis for policies which will be designed to preserve or enhance all of the aspects of character and appearance that define an area's special interest. This could be a space between buildings, a vista or fine tree. The historic development of an area can often be traced through road patterns, building types and details as well as open spaces.



Where are the Waveney district conservation areas?

At the time of writing there are sixteen conservation areas in the district:

*Ellingham/Mettingham**

Holton

Homersfield

*Oulton Broad***

*Somerleyton***

Walberswick

Wangford

Wissett

Wrentham

*Beccles***

*Bungay***

Halesworth

North Lowestoft

South Lowestoft

Southwold

Southwold Harbour

*Under Broads Authority jurisdiction, (meaning that the policies in place are those of the Broads Authority).

**Conservation areas, parts of which are included under Broads Authority jurisdiction.

Conservation:

'Retention of existing buildings or groups of buildings, taking care not to alter or destroy character or detail, even though repairs or changes may be necessary. Sensitive conservation is concerned to preserve as much original fabric as possible, and make overt what is new and what is old. Conservation does not necessarily mean preservation; it can involve considerable intervention, even much new building, but the key to success is in respecting existing character, and even enhancing it'.

Ada Louise Landman Huxtable, architectural critic, quoted in the Oxford Dictionary of Architecture, OUP 1999.





What are the controls?

Planning controls in conservation areas limit alterations that would elsewhere be 'permitted development' (ie, would not require planning permission). If you live in a conservation area, you may require planning permission to carry out alterations if they affect the view of your property from public areas. (This may also include the rear of the property if you live in an area backing onto a road or footpath). Such work includes cladding with stone or other materials, including render. Adding dormer windows, siting of satellite dishes and some porches and extensions are also controlled.



You will need planning permission to carry out demolition of buildings, and permission for work to trees is also required (see opposite).



Conservation area controls were found to be insufficient to protect certain significant elements of a building, leading to the application of further controls in Waveney conservation areas...

Further controls through Article 4 directions...

Local authorities are able to increase controls within conservation areas through the application of what are referred to as Article 4 directions. These make further restrictions on permitted development rights to residential properties. Once these have been imposed in an area, it means that planning permission will be required to make any change of design or material to any part of the property facing a public thoroughfare. This includes replacing windows; painting previously unpainted buildings or stripping paint from them; erection, alteration or demolition of part or all of a wall, fence, gate or other enclosure; the construction of a porch. Also covered is the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling; any alteration to its roof; the provision of a building, enclosure, swimming pool, hard surface, etcetera, within the grounds, or 'curtilage', of the building. Because these controls are a removal of what would otherwise be 'permitted development', the planning



...and Waveney's guidance on window replacement

application is free. However, the other requirements for making applications still apply, for example plans and supporting information as outlined on the appropriate forms.

Remember, elevations of your property not visible from a public place are not affected and these will enjoy the normal 'permitted development' rights for a conservation area.

Copies of the Waveney district Article 4 directions are available from the planning department.

Waveney's guidance on Window replacement

Waveney District Council has developed a policy which is used to determine what is an appropriate replacement window, door or porch for any given conservation area property. The policy scores your property on its location, general condition and the condition of the feature to be replaced. If you are considering carrying out work of this kind, call us for further details.

Trees in conservation areas

Trees in conservation areas which are already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) are subject to the normal TPO controls, but the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 also makes provision for trees which are not the subject of a TPO.

Under section 211, anyone proposing to cut down or carry out works to a tree within a conservation area is required to give the local planning authority six weeks prior notice, in order for consideration to be given to the need for a TPO.

The works must not be carried out during the six week period unless written permission is first obtained from the local planning authority. Without this, the owner or person carrying out the work could be fined and a replacement tree may have to be planted.

Exceptions to this include:

- making a tree safe if it is an imminent threat to people or property.
- removing deadwood or a dead tree
- carrying out works to a tree less than 7.5 cm in diameter, measured 1.5 m above the ground.

For further tree enquiries, please contact the council's landscape adviser on 01502 523075.



What are my obligations?

Owners should:

- Look after the building. Use appropriate maintenance methods and materials. Remember, your building is an important component of the conservation area as well as being probably your most significant asset.
- Find out about materials compatibility. Use of incorrect materials can cause damage to your property. If you are in doubt, we can help.
- Always ask if you are unsure of what requires permission.

The Waveney design & conservation team will:

- Give you advice on what is 'special' about your building.
- Give you 'best practice' advice on repairs and maintenance.
- Advise on alterations to a building in the conservation area, or on new construction within the curtilage of an existing building. Pre-application advice prior to making an application is recommended.
- If we cannot help, we always know of someone who can.

How to make an application

All proposals should be made on the normal planning application forms. The standard procedures for making these will apply.

Applications are normally decided within eight weeks and particularly when the proposals are of a minor nature.

If a proposal is refused, you can either make an appeal (within three months) or amend the proposal and re-apply. In all cases, thorough early discussions can alleviate unnecessary delays and frustrations.

Once you are ready to make an application, you will need to:

- Prepare details of your proposals. Some applications will require technical drawings to scale, others only a sketch or annotated photograph.
- Check whether other types of permission are required, such as building regulations, advertisement consent, etc.



Important note

If you are the owner of a listed building, please also refer to the Waveney District Council publication, 'A guide for owners and occupiers of listed buildings'.

Glossary of terms:

Permitted development

Current planning law enables some alterations to be made to the outside of homes without planning permission. These alterations are known as 'permitted development', and include changing windows and doors and demolishing boundary walls.

Article 4 direction

Additional 'permitted development' rights can be withdrawn under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, and this is known as an Article 4 direction. It applies to residential properties only and will list specific issues.

Residential building

This is defined as a single occupancy dwelling, in other words a house used as single-family accommodation.

Multiple occupancy building

This is where there are several residential or commercial units within one building, such as a block of flats or a business with accommodation on the upper floors. These buildings have no 'permitted development' rights, so planning applications are always required.

Commercial building

As with multiple occupancy buildings, commercial properties have no 'permitted development' rights, so planning applications for modifications are always required.



How to contact us

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Design and conservation

Telephone: (01502) 562111

Email: psc@eastsuffolk.gov.uk



Planning and Building Control

Telephone: (01502) 523072

Email: psc@waveney.gov.uk



If you would like to make a comment about the design & conservation service, please refer in the first instance to:

Planning Development Manager
Waveney District Council
Riverside
4 Canning Road
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR33 0EQ
Telephone: (01502) 562111



Other sources of information

Broads Authority

www.broads-authority.gov.uk

Useful websites

www.historicengland.org.uk

www.ihbc.org.uk

www.spab.org.uk

www.c20society.org.uk

www.victoriansociety.org.uk

www.georgiangroup.org.uk

Legislation

National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.

Chapter 7: Requiring good design

Chapter 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment



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