

Conservation Areas

A guide for owners and occupiers

Informal Guidance - October 2024*

*Updated to reflect the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy and to make document accessible



Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of

Conservation Areas in Gravesham

What is a Conservation Area?

Introduced by the Government in 1967, the power to designate Conservation Areas reflected concerns that rapid changes were damaging the architectural and historical heritage of our cities, towns and villages. Since that date local authorities are required by legislation, to survey their administrative area from time to time and to designate areas that have special architectural or historical interest as Conservation Areas. We also have a duty to ensure the preservation or enhancement of those areas.

Rather than being in opposition to change, the Council's powers should be seen as caring for buildings and places, while at the same time allowing new development necessary for the continuing life and work of the community. In conservation areas there are some extra planning controls and considerations in place to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the place special. Sensitive management of change is achieved through careful and effective development management decisions and policy making through the local plan and supplementary planning guidance.

The identification of what makes each Conservation Area special and a framework for their future control and enhancement are detailed in our [Conservation Area Appraisals](#)

Controls in Conservation Areas

- The demolition of certain buildings and boundary treatments is brought within conservation area control and they may only be demolished with the consent of the Council
- It is an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy trees (with certain exceptions). Six weeks notice in writing is required, during which time the Council will either approve the works or consider protecting the trees by a Tree Preservation Order
- Permitted development rights under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 are more restricted than in other areas. For instance, for single family dwellings, the express grant of planning permission will be required for:-
 - cladding any part of the exterior of the house with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles
 - the construction of dormer windows in any roof slope
 - installing a satellite dish on a chimney, on a wall or roof slope fronting a highway, on a building exceeding 15 metres in height or if the dish is larger than 90cm in diameter

- The installation of radio masts, antennae, or radio equipment housing with a volume in excess of 2 cubic metres is also brought under planning control
- There is an upper limit of 500 square metres for 'permitted development' extensions to industrial and warehouse buildings
- Advertisements are required to harmonise with the buildings on which they are displayed. Illuminated signs require advertisement consent
- Solar Panels - wall mounted panels must not be fitted to a wall which fronts a highway. Equipment on a building should be sited, so far as is practicable, to minimize the effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.

Further controls on permitted development relating to single family dwelling houses in Conservation Areas are being introduced by the Council in the form of Article 4 Directions. Planning permission may therefore be required for minor development such as alterations to windows and doors and other features and demolition of chimneys, walls, fences and gates, construction of hard surfaces, painting of the exterior etc. where these front a highway or open space.

Flats, maisonettes, commercial buildings and properties in mixed use have limited permitted development rights and planning permission will therefore be required for most development including minor alterations to the exterior of buildings, the construction of hard surfaces etc.

The law relating to such matters can be complex and if there is any doubt about whether or not consent is required it is advisable to consult the Planning Department before proceeding with any works.

What special requirements need to be met if planning permission is to be granted for development in a Conservation Area?

In addition to normal planning considerations, proposed development within or adjacent to a Conservation Area (whether it is new buildings, extensions, alterations or the change of use of a building) will be judged by whether it preserves and/or enhances the character and appearance of that Conservation Area. Policies relating to conservation are contained in the Local Plan Core Strategy Chapter 5.16 Policy CS20 Heritage and the Historic Environment.

In general, the Council will seek to ensure that any proposed development is sympathetic to its surroundings. This does not necessarily rule out good, modern buildings but the emphasis, above all, is on quality of both design and materials and appropriateness of scale and massing. In particular, new developments will be expected to:-

- Relate well to the topography and history of the locality, and also to the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it
- Respect important views
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- Create new views and juxtapositions that add to the variety and texture of their setting.

It is strongly recommended that you employ specialist advisors with appropriate experience to assist you with your proposals. Early consultation with the Council's planning department and conservation officer is also advised.

Planning applications within or adjacent to Conservation Areas will not normally be considered in outline form. Applications should therefore show the detailed siting, design (including materials), external appearance, landscaping and means of access. Please refer to our [Validation list](#) when submitting an application.

Demolition of a building or part of a building that contributes to the character of a Conservation Area will normally be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that it is wholly beyond repair. Where redevelopment is envisaged, demolition will only be permitted where there are acceptable detailed plans for new development.

The Council recognises that the opinions of local people are important and values their help and support in maintaining standards and achieving enhancements in Conservation Areas. For those who live, or work in Conservation Areas or are merely visiting them, there are advantages in terms of an attractive environment but this can only be maintained by careful management of change. Designation therefore brings with it additional responsibilities for all concerned. The Council welcomes the public's assistance with its efforts to preserve and enhance Conservation Areas.

Gravesham Conservation Areas

Urban areas	Designated	Rural areas	Designated
Darnley Road, Gravesend	1.2.1990 extended 14.2.2001	Cobham	1.1.1970
Harmer Street, Gravesend	16.1.1970 extended 17.5.1990	Higham Church Street	5.4.1979
High Street/Queen Street Gravesend	16.1.1970	Harvel, Meopham	25.9.1970
King Street, Gravesend	18/12/1980 extended 9.9.1998 and 14/2/ 2001	Hook Green, Meopham	29.6.1970
Milton Place, Gravesend	1.2.1990 extended 14.2.2001	Lower Higham	29.9.2008
Overcliffe	1.2.1990 extended 14.2.2001	Meopham Green	23.1.1970
Pelham Road/The Avenue,	15.2.1995 extended 14.2. 2001	The Street, Meopham	23.1.1970
Gravesend Riverside	18.12.1980 extended 14.2. 2001	Chestnut Green, Shorne	27.4.1976
Upper Windmill Street, Gravesend	16.1.1970	Queens Farm, Shorne	14.2.2001
Windmill Hill, Gravesend	29.7.1975 extended 1991 and 1999	Shorne (Village)	23.2.1970
The Hill, Northfleet	1.2.1990 extended 14.2.2001	Thong, Shorne	March 1981
Lansdowne Square, Northfleet	27.7.1995 extended 14.2.2001		

Advice and Further Information:

This document is for guidance only.

For general enquiries on Planning and Conservation area planning consent please visit [Do I need planning?](#) and [Heritage and conservation](#) sections of our website, for information on protected trees go to [Nature conservation and landscape](#)

If you are unsure about the need for planning permission you are advised to consult the Development Management team before undertaking any works to the property. You can reach them by emailing planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk