



Conservation Areas: An Outline Guide

Introduction.

Every historic town or village has a distinctive character of its own which is the result of a fusion of landscape, building materials, building traditions and economic activity; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This local character gives people a sense of belonging and community and the notion of Conservation Areas first came into being in 1967 as a way of trying to protect it.

In legal terms, a Conservation Area is *an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* and the Council has a duty to take a look at its area every so often and identify such areas so that they can be designated.

It is important to recognize that a Conservation Area may be designated because it has special historic interest – not all Conservation Areas are pretty!

Twenty one areas within North West Leicestershire have so far been identified as having the necessary special interest and designated as Conservation Areas: -

Appleby Magna
Ashby de la Zouch
Ashby de la Zouch Canal (to Snarestone)
Blackfordby
Breedon on the Hill
Castle Donington

Cavendish Bridge
Coleorton Hall
Diseworth
Heath End
Hemington
Ibstock
Lockington
Long Whatton
Measham
Packington
Ravenstone
Snarestone
Staunton Harold
Tonge
Wilson

More information, including a map, on each of these can be found on the Council's web site; a web link is provided at the end of this leaflet

The Conservation Areas of North West Leicestershire represent a range of different types of settlement. Many are rural, agricultural communities containing houses, cottages and farm buildings of traditional construction. Ashby Canal and Measham represent the Industrial Revolution whilst architecture of more pretension is exhibited in the Georgian towns of Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington and the country houses of Staunton Harold and Coleorton Hall



Character

Many different elements go into defining the special architectural or historic interest required for Conservation Area designation. Buildings are obviously the most significant element and almost all Conservation Areas contain period buildings of traditional design and construction.

Some other elements which can contribute to the character of a Conservation Area are illustrated here and include walls and boundaries, street furniture, traditional surface materials, trees and open green spaces, important views

It is the combination of the grand with the modest, the private with the public, and the everyday with the particular that make up a Conservation Area



Planning Controls

Conservation Areas are intended not solely to protect individual buildings but to protect the general character of the area. Building uses, materials, scale of buildings, street furniture, surfacing, spaces between buildings and traffic impact are all issues which may affect the quality of an area.

Conservation Area status is not meant to stop all change but rather to ensure that change is managed in a way that works with the areas' special character rather than against it

Probably the most important effect of designation is the greater emphasis placed on matters of design when planning **new development**. The District Council is required to pay *special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* when considering planning applications within Conservation Areas. This does not mean that nothing will ever change, but rather that new development will respect the established character of the area. New buildings will usually be similar to the existing in design, materials and scale. Planning applications in Conservation Areas are also advertised more widely than normal, with a notice being displayed on site and in the local press.

In considering planning applications within Conservation Areas, the Council will need more detailed drawings and information on the proposed development.

Conservation Area designation does not impose many **additional planning controls** over and above those

which apply in other areas. There are, however, some instances where permission may be required for works to **dwelling**s specifically because they are in a Conservation Area:

- Some extensions will require permission.
- All roof dormers require planning permission.
- Some outbuildings, pools and oil/gas containers will require planning permission
- Some satellite Dishes will require planning permission
- All external wall claddings in Conservation Areas require planning permission.
- Some domestic micro-generation equipment will require planning permission

This list is a brief summary of a complex document and should not be relied upon as a definitive statement. It relates to dwellings only, not commercial buildings, mixed-use buildings, or flats. It is always advisable to check with the Council on the need for planning permission and there is a Preliminary Enquiry Form to do this which can be found on the Council's web site; a link is provided at the end of this leaflet.

Another significant effect of designation is a degree of **control over demolition**. A special permission called 'Conservation Area Consent' is required for the total or near-total demolition of most buildings, walls and fences.

Trees can make a significant contribution to the quality of a Conservation Area and, for those not covered by a separate Tree Preservation Order (TPO), six weeks



notice must be given to the Council of the intention to do any works (including topping, lopping, felling or up rooting) to them. A form to use giving this notice can be found on the Council's web site and a link is provided at the end of this leaflet.

Many Conservation Areas include shops and traditional shop fronts often play an important role in establishing an area's character. Planning permission is required for most alterations to **shop fronts** as well as for new ones and the Council will usually seek to retain and repair surviving old shop fronts and reinstate ones of traditional design where the original has been lost.

Advertisement consent is required for the display of many signs in Conservation Areas and new signs should be sympathetic to the character of a locality. The Council has published separate guidance on shop fronts and signage, which can be found on the Council's web site; a link is provided at the end of this leaflet.

Article 4(2) Directions

It is possible to bring more works within the control of the planning system using a legal mechanism called an 'Article 4(2) Direction', although this is not something to be done lightly. At the time of writing, only Staunton Harold and Lockington Conservation Areas are affected by Article 4(2) Directions within North West Leicestershire. More information can be found on the Council's web site by following the links provided at the end of this leaflet

Conservation Area Appraisals

The District Council has prepared documents for each of the twenty one conservation areas which set out what the Council considers to be special about each one. These are available on the Council's website using

the link provided at the end of the leaflet.

These were prepared some years ago but their content still remains largely valid. A programme of updating and revision is under way and the web site will always have the most up-to-date version available.

Good Neighbourliness

For all the regulatory and other activities that the Council and its partners can do, it is the residents of Conservation Areas who have the greatest ability to protect and enhance it. If a property is left to fall into disrepair or is damaged by inappropriate alterations, it is all the residents who are disadvantaged

The retention of traditional roof materials, windows, doors and boundary treatments rather than their substitution with unsympathetic modern alternatives or their reinstatement where lost will both protect and enhance the Conservation Area and add value to the individual properties. On a more prosaic level, the same is true of untidy gardens.

There are few things which better protect a place than a good community spirit.



Web Links

Reference is made in a number of places within this leaflet to information available on the Council's web site. The following links will take you to those pages. If you are reading this as a PDF document and have an open internet connection, clicking on the links should take you to the relevant page. If you are reading a paper copy, you will have to enter the addresses into your web browser.

For more information, including a map, on all of the District's Conservation Areas:-

<http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/development%5Fcontrol/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=4604>

For the Preliminary Enquiry Form:-

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/development_control/documents/Preliminary%5FEnquiry%5FSep%5F2008%2Epdf

For the form to give the Council notice of works on a tree within a Conservation Area:-

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/appPDF/G2435Form031.pdf>

For the Council's guidance note on shop fronts and adverts:-

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/development_control/documents/Shopfront%5FGuidance%2Epdf

For information on the Lockington Article 4(2) Direction:-

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/development_control/documents/Lockington%5FArticle%5F4%28%29%5FGuide%2Epdf

For information on the Staunton Harold Article 4(2) Direction:-

http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/development_control/documents/Staunton%5FHarold%5FArticle%5F4%28%29%5FGuide%2Epdf

For Conservation Area Appraisals:-

<http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/development%5Fcontrol/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=4604>



Further Information

This leaflet is intended to give general guidance only and is not an accurate statement of planning law. Anyone contemplating works to a property within a Conservation Area is strongly advised to discuss those works with the Council before starting. Contact details are given below.

This guide only relates to Conservation Areas. A separate guide is available for owners of Listed Buildings. Permission under the Building Regulations may also be required for works.

For buildings:

Principal Planning Officer (Conservation),
North West Leicestershire District Council,
Council Offices,
COALVILLE
LE67 3FJ

01530 454 685
david.boyson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

For works affecting trees:

The Tree Officer
North West Leicestershire District Council,
Council Offices,
COALVILLE
LE67 3FJ

01530 454 683
julian.simpson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

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