



Conservation Areas

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[1st Edition]



CONSERVATION ADVICE

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Introduction

Conservation Areas have been recognised for their special character, and a designation to take pride and interest in. Even if your building is not individually listed as being of special historic or architectural interest, it may have many interesting features such as traditional materials or local building details, or it will be part of a group of buildings which together have a special visual quality. It will thus be rewarding, both visually and financially, to take care over any alterations, changes to roof or walling materials, doors or windows, and even colour schemes, with such buildings. To preserve the special interest of Conservation Areas, property owners are subject to more planning restrictions than elsewhere.

Remember that once an interesting feature is lost it may be impossible or very expensive to recreate it. The advice given on repair and materials in the other conservation advice guidance leaflets will often also be appropriate to unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, especially those built with traditional materials.

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What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area, which is designated by the local authority, is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Usually this constitutes the historic core of a settlement and will probably itself contain a number of listed buildings, which have their own individual protection.

Whilst many buildings within a Conservation Area may be unlisted, they are nevertheless important as they can provide the setting for the listed buildings, enclose interesting spaces or form an identifiable group in their own right. Some unlisted historic buildings in the Conservation Area may be considered Non-Designated Heritage Assets. Non-Designated Heritage Assets, sometimes known as ‘Locally Listed’, are historic buildings which due to their historic, aesthetic, architectural or communal interest have heritage significance on a local level.

The spaces between buildings, views and vistas, and boundary features such as walls, hedges and railings, are all vital to the visual character and distinctiveness of the area and warrant special attention and safeguarding. Even humble outbuildings, such as old workshops, stores or garden structures can add visual variety and often show how the area has evolved historically.

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Where are our Conservation Areas?

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas within their boundaries, with a special emphasis on the quality and interest of the areas as a whole, rather than only on the quality of the buildings there.

There are 60 Conservation Areas in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. Most were designated in the 1970s, with a few exceptions.

Babergh

Bildeston
 Boxford
 Brent Eleigh
 Brettenham
 Bures St Mary
 Chelsworth
 Cockfield (Cross Green)
 East Bergholt
 Glemsford
 Great Waldingfield
 Hadleigh
 Hartest
 Higham
 Kersey
 Kettlebaston
 Lavenham
 Little Waldingfield
 Long Melford

Mid Suffolk

Badley
 Beyton
 Botesdale/Rickinghall
 Coddensham
 Debenham
 Drinkstone Mills
 Eye
 Felsham
 Finningham
 Fressingfield
 Haughley
 Hoxne
 Hunston
 Laxfield
 Mellis
 Mendlesham
 Metfield
 Needham Market



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Monks Eleigh	Palgrave
Nayland	Rattlesden
Naughton	Redgrave
Pin Mill	Stowmarket
Polstead	Stradbroke
Shotley Gate	Tostock
Stoke by Nayland	Thrandeston
Stratford St Mary	Walsham le Willows
Sudbury	Wattisfield
Thorington Street	Wetheringsett
Woolverstone	Wickham Skeith
	Wingfield
	Woolpit

Many of our Conservation Areas have appraisal documents, which provide additional information on the specific features important to that area. They will help identify significant views, local traditional building materials, trees and planting and areas which could be improved. The appraisals can be found on our websites:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/conservation-area-appraisals-1>

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/conservation-area-appraisals-1>

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Creating and Updating Conservation Areas

The Council has a duty to designate and appraise new Conservation Areas where appropriate, and from time to time re-appraise the existing designations. Most of the current Conservation Area appraisals were made between 2008 and 2013. Historic England has since published guidance which sets the new standard for Conservation Area appraisals, and we are therefore in the process of reviewing the existing appraisals and considering new areas for designation whilst seeking engagement from the local communities.

Appraisal of a Conservation Area involves careful assessment of the area's geology, topography, archaeology, history, listed buildings, use of local materials, trees, green spaces, relationship to the countryside, former uses and a look at its detracting features if any. Most Conservation Areas have interest at all of these levels, although some may have a particular emphasis or local feature worth preserving. Appraisals should also include a Management Plan to continue the future preservation and enhancement of the area, and to guide decision-making in planning.

When considering planning applications, we will give special consideration to the desire to preserve and enhance the area, as well as consulting more widely than would be the case for an application outside of a Conservation Area. Planning applications in a Conservation Area must be advertised locally, both on site and in a local newspaper, giving members of the

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public a period of 21 days in which to provide comments. In addition, local amenity groups are also invited to comment on applications.

Living in a Conservation Area

Whilst many people are familiar with the term ‘Listed Building’ where an individual building is judged to be of special architectural or historic interest, the concept of a Conservation Area is not always so easily understood. However, there are many parts of our towns and villages which have a special quality, which the Government feels is ‘desirable to preserve or enhance’ using Conservation Area designation. This is due not just to the number of listed buildings there, but also derives from other special characteristics which contribute to the area’s character and appearance, which can include

- The way buildings are grouped, in clusters around greens or enclosing squares, churches or market places, or in rows which are either formal or of an interesting mix of types or styles
- The variety or special unity of the buildings, of which only some, or even none, are listed
- The spaces themselves, such as winding streets, green ‘islands’ or streets that focus at one or both ends on characterful buildings. These may be impressive listed

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structures such as a church, or humble unlisted workshops or walls of brick and flint

- Street furniture, such as pumps, railings, sign posts, and paving materials from formal York stone slabs to simple gravel, cobbles or other pleasing textures
- Soft landscaping areas, which can act as a background for the buildings or become focal points in their own right. These range from mighty oak trees down to grass verges, hedges or formal front gardens

New developments in Conservation Areas

New development in or near a Conservation Area, such as new buildings and additions or extensions to existing buildings, are subject to the usual requirements for planning permission. In addition, planning applications for such proposals will have to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the local character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as well as its setting. In order to secure this, the Council will ask applicants to include a Heritage Statement with any application which has the potential to the impact the Conservation Area.

The Council will generally require fully detailed schemes to be submitted including plans and elevations showing the new development in its setting, giving details of siting, massing, construction materials and architectural detailing. Proposed

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development should relate well to its setting in terms of scale and massing, and special attention should be given to the existing building line and historic patterns of development. Elements of the Conservation Area which contribute to its character and appearance, such as important open spaces, green spaces or its relationship to the surrounding countryside, should be preserved.

Additions to unlisted dwellings should complement their form and character, with innovative new architecture also being appropriate in many cases so long as high quality materials are used. The temptation for new development to replicate historic forms without respecting the historic context can result in pastiche (or 'false historic') additions, which should be resisted. Discussing draft proposals on sensitive sites with the Heritage Team at pre-application stage will enable us to provide specific guidance, tailored to your proposal.

Altering existing buildings in Conservation Areas

The General Permitted Development Order allows some minor works to be carried out without formal planning permission, making them 'permitted development'. However, in a Conservation Area you will need planning permission for certain minor works that would be 'permitted development' elsewhere. These include:

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- Extensions located on side elevations and extensions to the rear which would be more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling
- Enlargement of or alterations to the form of the roof
- Cladding any of the elevations with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles
- The installation of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a wall or roof slope which fronts a highway or is the principal or side elevation of a dwelling
- The installation of solar panels on a roof slope which fronts a highway
- The replacement of windows if they are different in appearance.

These additional development controls are aimed at maintaining the special character and appearance of the area, which in turn increases the value of properties in the area.

Article 4(2) Directions

In addition, further permitted development rights may be removed by the Council if it applies for 'Article 4(2) Directions' to control additional minor works, such as door or window replacements, porches and other small extensions. The

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consequence of removing these rights is that planning permission is then needed to carry out these works, however such applications are free.

Currently, Article 4(2) directions apply in the Conservation Areas in Glemsford and Felsham, and in parts of Sudbury.

Trees in Conservation Areas

Conservation Area status gives trees within the area special protection. All plants with a minimum diameter of 75mm (3") at a point 1.5m (5') above the ground are considered trees and are covered by this protection. You will have to give six weeks notice to the Council for any proposed works to trees in a Conservation Area. During those six weeks the Council must decide whether or not to make the trees the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.

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Useful Resources

Emails

- heritage@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk / 0300 123 4000
Option 5, Option 3
- planning@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk / 0300 123 4000
Option 5, Option 3

Websites

- Legislation for Designated Heritage Assets – HM Government. *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. - [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- National Planning Policy – HM Government. *National Planning Policy Framework* - [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)



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- Heritage Asset Search – Historic England, 2024. *Search The List* - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Conservation Area Appraisals – Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, 2024. *Conservation Areas*. - <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/conservation-areas/> / <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/conservation-areas>
- Living in a Conservation Area – Historic England, 2012 - <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/owning-historic-property/conservation-area/>
- Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management – Historic England, 2019 - <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>
- Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage – Historic England, 2021 - <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>

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- Guidance on Planning Permission Requirements – Planning Portal, 2024. -
<https://interactive.planningportal.co.uk/>
- Ecology Advice – Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2016. *A Householder’s Guide to Engaging an Ecologist Key Considerations.* -
https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/A_Householders_Guide_to_Engaging_an_Ecologist_Jan_2016.pdf
- Further Ecology Advice – Bat Conservation Trust, 2024. *Getting Personalised Advice.* -
<https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/getting-personalised-advice>
- Archaeology Advice – Suffolk County Council, 2024. *Suffolk Archaeological Service.* -
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/culture-heritage-and-leisure/suffolk-archaeological-service>