



THE EFFECTS OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

“ A Conservation Area – “An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”

The historic environment contributes to our quality of life by providing an attractive environment in which to live, work or relax. With this in mind, conservation areas were introduced by the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and Local Authorities were required to identify and designate conservation areas. This duty is now part of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act. The Act also requires the review of existing conservation areas, and where appropriate, the designation of new ones.

The quality and interest of a conservation area depends upon a combination of factors:- the relationship and architectural quality of buildings, materials, spaces, walls, trees, and other landscape features, together with views in and out of the area. Conservation Area designation increases the Council's powers. In particular, planning applications are judged by their impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area as well as the normal planning criteria. There are greater controls over demolition and the rights that owners have to do work without Planning Permission (Permitted Development Rights) are reduced.

The Borough Council uses the following statutory and discretionary powers to fulfil this responsibility on behalf of the community:-

- Outline planning applications for new buildings are not acceptable. Full details must be submitted in to give the Local Authority, consultees and the general public the opportunity to consider the likely impact of the proposals on the site, its immediate surroundings and the overall character of the conservation area.
- Permitted development rights may be removed entirely by means of an Article 4 Direction. Such directions do exist for a number of Conservation Areas so please check before proceeding with any development
- Planning applications in conservation areas must be advertised on site and in the local press for 21 days to give people the opportunity to comment
- Total or substantial demolition of a building in a conservation area and with a volume of 115 cubic metres or more requires Planning Permission.

- Applications for demolition and/or development in conservation areas are referred to the Borough Council's Conservation Officers and may also be referred to the Conservation Area Advisory Panel.
- Trees, hedges, grass verges and boundary walls are important character feature and should be retained. New tree planting should be of an indigenous species.
- Trees in conservation areas are also protected. You must inform the Borough Council in writing, at least six weeks before you wish to carry out work and get approval in writing before you start. This is to give the Authority the opportunity to carry out an inspection and decide whether the tree is of sufficient merit to require the protection of a Tree Preservation Order. The Borough Council's Landscape Officer in the Planning Policy Service can advise.

Please Note:-

- Anyone interested in carrying out any development or tree work in a conservation area should seek advice from the Borough Council before starting work or making a formal application.
NB. It is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised work to buildings or trees within a conservation area and you and your contractor could be prosecuted if you do not obtain the necessary consents.
- Conservation Area designation cannot be used as a tool to stop development.
- Conservation area designation is about the built environment and the spaces between and around the buildings. It is not about large areas of open space e.g. commons and agricultural land. They are already protected under their own designation within the Boroughs Local Plan.

And Finally:-

- Draft Conservation Area Character Statements are in place for most of the existing conservation areas in West Norfolk. Finalised versions will be produced when all the draft statements have been completed.
- New conservation areas will also be looked at. Villages which have actively sought conservation area designation will be dealt with first
- New conservation area designation must have community support and public consultation is a legal requirement.

*PML 2005
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