

THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING GUIDANCE

Leaflet No 3



CONSERVATION AREAS

WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW
DO THEY AFFECT ME?

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

Thanet has an important historic heritage, and this is not limited just to particular buildings. Throughout the District, there are whole areas which are rich in architectural quality and historic interest. Under National Planning Law, the Council has a duty to identify areas whose special architectural or historic qualities deserve to be protected or reinforced, and to designate them as Conservation Areas⁽¹⁾. Extra planning controls then help to protect these special qualities.

Within Thanet, there are 16 defined areas designated as Conservation Areas. Their special qualities include architecture, the grouping of buildings, attractive views, interesting street patterns, landscape and historical association. They range in size from the expansive and spectacular sweep of the waterfront and town centre of Ramsgate, to the wooded vistas of Acol village.



Thanet's Conservation areas:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----|------------------|
| 1. | Broadstairs | 9. | Pegwell |
| 2. | Sarre | 10. | Margate |
| 3. | Minster | 11. | Monkton |
| 4. | St Nicholas-at-Wade | 12. | Ramsgate |
| 5. | Kingsgate | 13. | Northdown |
| 6. | Reading Street | 14. | Acol |
| 7. | St Peters | 15. | Margate Seafront |
| 8. | Birchington | 16. | Westgate-on-Sea |

(1) Conservation Areas are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance".

WHY ARE CONSERVATION AREAS IMPORTANT?

Conservation Areas contain many of the buildings and features important in Thanet's past, often forming a cherished part of the street scene, enjoyed by several generations. They are also an important asset in securing our future prosperity. Old, distinctive and interesting areas, including the Town Centre Conservation Areas, attract spending visitors and can interest investors wanting to locate in an attractive District. Homebuyers are often prepared to pay more for property in a Conservation Area, especially where buildings have been well maintained and keep their original character.

Conservation Areas contain many of the buildings and features important in Thanet. The Council is now carrying out surveys of each Conservation Area to clarify the special characteristics of each one, and identify what should be protected and improved. Separate leaflets are to be produced as a guide for people living or occupying property in each area.



HOW DO CONSERVATION AREAS AFFECT ME?

The protection and improvement of the qualities of each Conservation Area depends largely on the care taken by individual property owners in how they use, maintain and repair their property. (See Maintaining Character/Eroding Character section of this leaflet).

If you own or occupy a building in a Conservation Area, it is also important to know that special planning controls apply. Conservation Areas are not intended to be preserved unchanged forever, they need to remain alive, and the buildings may need to be updated at times.

What is important is to ensure that where any changes are proposed, the special qualities of the Area are protected and where possible reinforced. Therefore the Council will use its powers to control development rather than prevent it. The Council's policies on proposals for development are set out in full in the Isle of Thanet Local Plan, which can be inspected or purchased at the Council's Offices.

MAINTAINING CHARACTER



PRESERVATION OF THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER OF HOUSES

- Retain existing slates or tiles and replace damaged ones with natural slates or tiles to match the originals.
- Retain chimney pots and chimney stacks. Repair and repoint brickwork to match the existing.
- Retain the cast iron gutters and downpipes. Cleaning out gutters and blocked pipes can prolong the life of cast iron.
- Repair original double-hung sash windows and repaint.
- Repoint brickwork to match the original closely.
- Retain recessed porches and original entrance doors.
- Retain garden walls.
- The removal of original features can destroy the appearance of the property and the street.

ERODING CHARACTER



CHANGES WHICH CAN DESTROY THE CHARACTER OF HOUSES

- Changing original roof tiles or slates for thick concrete tiles.
- Adding rooflights which project above the roof line.
- Removing timber vertical sash windows and replacing with plastic or metal windows.
- Removing original bay windows and building combined porches with square bays and large plate glass windows.
- Changing the size of existing window openings.
- Adding porches with large plate glass windows.
- Building large flat-roofed dormers.
- Applying mock-tudor timbers to wall faces.
- Installing a stock pattern front door to enclose a recessed porch.
- Removal of chimney stacks.
- Installation of satellite dishes where they can be clearly seen.

SPECIAL PLANNING CONTROLS

When using its planning controls in Conservation Areas, the Council is required to "pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance". This means that the Council will only allow changes which will not harm the special qualities of the Area and will encourage proposals and designs which will further improve on these qualities. The Council will also take account of any effect on a Conservation Area when considering proposals on a site adjoining one. The special controls can be summarised as follows:

Demolition of Buildings

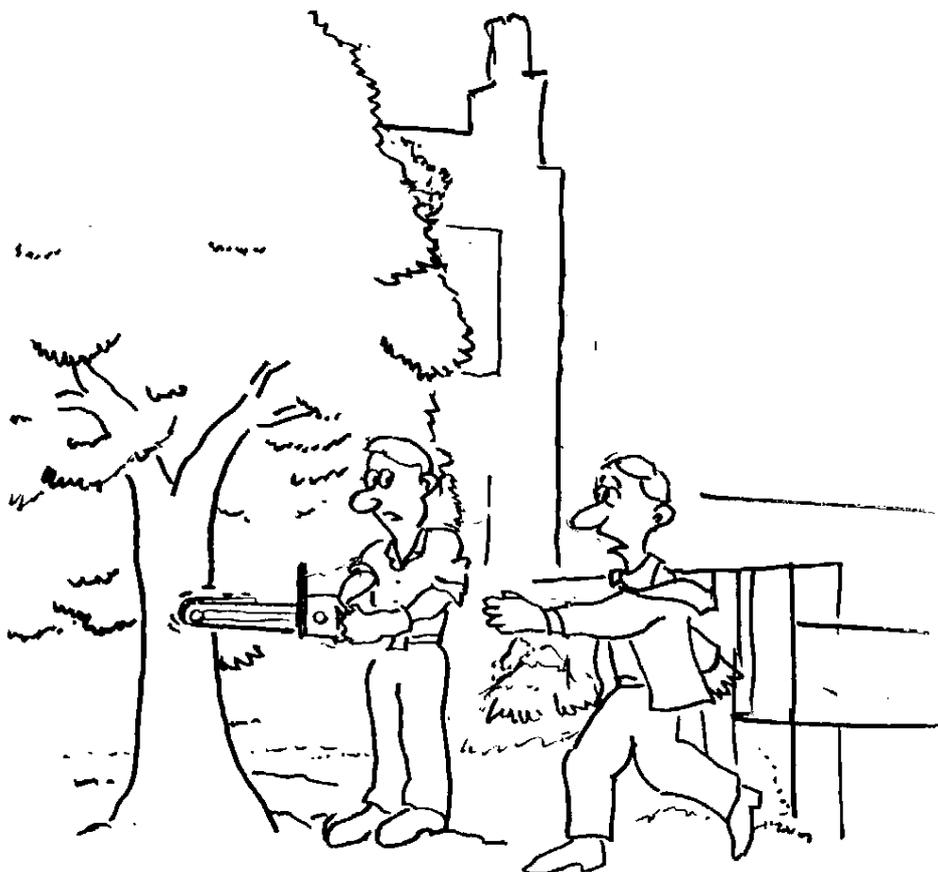
"Conservation Area Consent" as well as any planning permission is usually needed before you can demolish most buildings, structures, walls and outhouses in a Conservation Area.

Improvements, Extensions and Alterations

Some improvements, additions and alterations to a house may not usually require planning permission. However, in Conservation Areas, extra controls apply, and you are more likely to need permission. For example, enlargement of a dwelling house by altering or adding to its roof, cladding the outside with different materials like imitation stone, or in some cases, adding a satellite dish will require planning permission.

Trees

If you want to carry out any work to a tree, for example, to fell, lop, top or uproot, you must first give the Council six weeks' prior notice. Forms setting out the information needed to give notice are available from the Council or via the corporate website at www.thanet.gov.uk



*Feller! Feller! Spare that tree - Touch not a single twig.
Give notice first to T.D.C.- or the penalties are big!*

DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

If you propose to carry out building work, change the use of a property or display an advertisement in a Conservation Area, special attention is needed to make sure that your proposals will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the Area. Your plans should contain enough detail to show how the project would affect the Area. This will usually mean submission of detailed drawings showing materials, colours and how any building would relate to neighbouring buildings.

The Council will expect high standards of design, respecting the scale, materials and spaces between buildings. **Designing for development in Conservation Areas requires expertise, and, depending on what your project is, you may need to employ an architect or other person with appropriate experience and sensitive design skills to achieve an acceptable scheme.** Remember, the Council's Conservation Architects can offer free preliminary advice. Discussing your project with them at the outset may save you time and money as well as help you achieve a quality scheme.



*Well, No - I didn't use a skilled designer.
But surely these DIY carriage lamps will make it fit in ok!*

IT PAYS TO CHECK FIRST

This leaflet is intended as a rough guide only and is not exhaustive. **Always contact the Council's Planning Department so you are clear on the need for permission before committing yourself to any work. (There are penalties for unauthorised work!)**

Maps of Conservation Areas and a list of properties included within them can be inspected at the Planning Department Office.

LISTED BUILDINGS

In Thanet, many buildings inside (and outside) Conservation Areas are "Listed" in their own right as buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Special controls apply to such buildings and the advice of the Council's Conservation Architect should be sought. A separate supplementary Guidance Leaflet is being produced by the Council to explain more about "Listed Buildings".

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR REPAIR OF BUILDINGS

Proper maintenance and repair of historic buildings often requires traditional materials or specialised techniques, which can be more costly than contemporary materials and methods associated with modern buildings. Certain historic buildings within some of the District's Conservation Areas may, from time to time, be eligible for grant aid for exterior works. Where grant aid is available, all work must be carried out in appropriate materials to ensure the character of the building is protected. Leaflets explaining the operation of the Scheme and advice on eligibility of individual buildings are available from the District Council.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSERVATION AREAS

The Council aims to protect and reinforce the special qualities of Thanet's Conservation Areas by careful planning control, technical advice and available grant aid. **However, the success and care of Conservation Areas rests largely with individual owners, responsible for maintaining their property in good repair and respecting the individual features and qualities which make it a special place.**

The character and appearance of Conservation Areas is vulnerable, and may unwittingly be spoiled by owners who believe they are "improving" their property. Even small changes can significantly affect the whole Conservation Area. Therefore please note Maintaining and Eroding character section within this leaflet illustrating points to help property owners protect and reinforce these special qualities.



For further information, please contact the Conservation Architects/Local Plans Section at the following address:

**Planning Department
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P O Box 9, Cecil Street Margate, Kent CT9 1XZ.
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