

CONSERVATION AREAS FACT SHEET

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What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is an area designated by the local authority as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

This does not mean that you cannot make any alterations to the property. However, when considering planning applications, the local authority will give particular consideration to whether the changes you propose will adversely affect the surrounding area.

When will I need to apply for planning?

Generally speaking, you are allowed to make certain minor changes to your house without needing to apply for planning permission. This is called “permitted development” and is covered by the Town & Country Planning General Development Order, or GDO. However, the GDO will often be excluded in a Conservation Area because the authority wishes to retain control over development which would otherwise be permitted. Therefore you may need planning permission for certain types of work which would not need permission in other areas – for example, the Council’s rules regarding the size of extensions or other buildings on your property for which planning permission is required will be different in a Conservation Area.

The regulations governing planning applications are very complex and you are strongly advised to check with the Council whether or not the work you propose needs consent. If you build something which needs permission without first obtaining it, the Council is empowered to force you to put things right. This can prove very expensive and inconvenient. **It is always better to check first.**

You will generally need conservation area consent if the work involves the following:

- (i) pulling down any building which is more than 115 cubic metres in volume
- (ii) removing a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1 metre high where it is next to a highway, public footpath, bridleway, or public open space, or over 2 metres high elsewhere

If I have to apply for planning, what will I need to do?

If an application is required, you will usually be asked to submit:

- (a) a plan of the property.
- (b) A brief description of the proposed work
- (c) “before and after” drawings showing the changes to the elevations
- (d) a statement of the effect on the character and appearance of the locality

Professional advice is essential if you are contemplating major alterations. Brighton & Hove Council have specialist officers dealing with conservation matters. The local authority is obliged to publish details of your application in the local press and on the site itself. It also

has a duty to consider representations made by members of the public – your neighbours, for example.

Trees located in Conservation Areas

Most trees in Conservation Areas are protected and are treated in the same way as those covered by a Tree Preservation Order. You must notify the Council and obtain consent before lopping or removing any tree. Exceptions include small trees (check with the Council for the definition of “small”) and trees which are either dead or in a dangerous condition.