

# Ealing Conservation Areas FAQs

We understand the impact of designating a Conservation Area can be difficult to understand. To assist, we have prepared a Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for you below. You can also email [localplan@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@ealing.gov.uk) for more information.

In addition, your engagement with any comments is vital in shaping the conservation aspirations in your area and we encourage you to participate by asking questions or providing comments.

## What is a conservation area?

Conservation Areas (“CA”) are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The key legislation relating to the designation and protection of conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“Act”).

Once an area has been designated as a conservation area, any works which require planning permission within a conservation area could have a higher planning threshold for the proposed design and materials used, essentially, they may be subject to local conservation policies set out in our Local Plan and in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Our aim is to preserve or enhance the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area.

There are proposals to create a new Northfields CA and make changes to the existing conservation area boundaries. The council is seeking your views and comments on the proposal as part of our public engagement.

## Benefits of conservation area status

Conservation area designation, with additional planning restrictions, which will be subject to a further consultation, will bring positive benefits, including ensuring that the heritage values of the area are formally recognised, protected and managed. This means that residents, businesses and visitors can continue to experience, understand and enjoy these qualities in the years to come. Research has shown that it can also bring financial benefits, including positively affecting property prices as people value conservation areas for their distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character.

Conservation area designation does not mean that an area should be unchanging and static. Rather it seeks to ensure that new development adds to the evolution of the area’s character. This will be achieved by ensuring that development and

alterations are carefully designed to respect the surrounding character and building types and materials are in keeping with local traditions.

## **How do I find out if I live or own a business in a conservation area?**

You can find out if your building is situated within a conservation area through our [online map service](#).

You can also find out if your property is affected by the proposals set out in the [current consultation on conservation areas](#).

## **What is a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan?**

Conservation Area Appraisals are produced by the council and seek to describe the special architectural and historic character of the conservation area and those positive elements which are encouraged to be conserved. The documents seek to assist applicants who are considering making planning applications for works in a conservation area and to assist in the process of assessing and deciding on planning applications.

Management Plans provide guidance to applicants and owners on how positive change and good quality design within conservation areas can conserve or enhance its special character or appearance. Management Plans also identify if additional planning controls are needed or are in place to protect the character and appearance of conservation areas from [permitted development](#) such as Article 4 Directions.

View a list of the most up to date [Conservation Area Appraisals](#) we have produced, which includes links to the relevant documents.

We plan to update all existing appraisals and management plans including Article 4 Directions (removal of permitted development rights), once the current engagement on new designations and boundary changes has been concluded and any subsequent changes are carried forward. Keep an eye out on the website for these in the next few months.

## **What does the designation mean if I live in or own a business in a conservation area?**

Conservation area designation gives us additional planning control over certain works to buildings, which are set out below.

## **Demolition**

Planning permission is required to demolish an unlisted building (115 cubic metres in volume or more) completely or substantially within a conservation area, prior to the work being carried out. Planning permission is also required for the demolition of a boundary wall, gate, fence, or any other means of enclosure over one metre high where it fronts a highway (including public roads and footpaths, bridleways and unadopted streets or private ways), or two metres in height or more in any other case. It is important to note that Conservation Area Consent for such works is no longer needed and only planning permission for demolition in a conservation area is now required.

## **What is a Conservation Area Consent?**

Conservation area consent is different to planning permission, it is specifically required for changes that might affect the character of a designated conservation area. It focuses on preserving the unique qualities and architectural features within that area.

## **Permitted Development Rights**

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 sets out permitted development rights which allow householders to improve and extend their homes without the need to apply for planning permission, subject to a number of conditions. These largely relate to the external appearance of an unlisted single residential dwelling or House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) up to six beds.

Some permitted development rights however are restricted within conservation areas and planning permission is needed for some works which affect the external appearance of the building. Those applicable to single residential dwellings are included below, however it is important to note that permitted development rights do not apply to flats, or houses that have been converted to flats, and therefore any external changes to these buildings would require planning permission.

- raising the ridge of the roof and or expanding the size of a roof
- introduction of cladding (including render) to the external faces of the building (unless repairing existing). Changing existing cladding will also require planning permission, such as changing from roughcast to smooth render
- installation of satellite dishes on an elevation fronting a highway, on a chimney, and on a building over 15 metres high
- front and side extensions of one storey or more, and two storey rear extensions
- erection of detached ancillary buildings, sheds, or stores to the front or side of the dwelling house

- installing a dormer window to the roof
- replacing windows or doors with those of a different appearance (excluding painting of existing doors or windows)

The above list is not exhaustive. When considering applications for planning permission within a conservation area, we have a duty to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. We would encourage the submission of a pre-application request, where advice can be sought from the council on the acceptability of a proposal before a full planning application is submitted.

You can view more in the [Ealing Pre-Application Advice](#) page.

Permitted development rights applicable to shops and commercial premises are generally restricted to:

- painting external facades
- erecting front boundary treatment up to one metre in height
- extension and alteration of a commercial premises at ground floor (of the original building) up to 25% of the floor area or 50 square metres (whichever is less)
- certain advertisements which do not require deemed consent or express consent, you can view this in the [schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisement\) Regulations 2007](#)

Furthermore, some conservation areas are subject to an Article 4 Direction, which removes certain permitted development rights, further details of which are set out below.

## **What is an Article 4 Direction?**

A number of the already designated conservation areas within the Borough are subject to Article 4 Directions. These are put in place to restrict certain works to the exterior of single residential dwellings which would otherwise be considered permitted development. Our power to make and confirm an Article 4 Direction is under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. These directions are put in place to protect a conservation area from certain works which would have an impact on and harm its appearance and character.

An Article 4 Direction does not prevent the development in the area to which it has been applied. It instead requires that planning permission is first obtained from the council.

Please note we will be considering Article 4 Directions for the remaining conservation area at a later stage. More information will be shared with residents and those affected in due course. In the meantime, we hope the text below answers some questions you may have about the impact of Article 4 Directions.

## **Can I paint the outside walls to my house?**

Painting the exterior of an unlisted single residential dwelling or HMO is considered to be permitted development and therefore planning permission is not required unless an Article 4 Direction has been introduced within the conservation area which restricts such works. However, we would not encourage the painting of façades where it is not a common feature of the conservation area as a whole and the predominant character is that of a consistent use of unpainted brick, stone and or terracotta.

Painting the façade of flats or a house converted to flats does not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore planning permission is required for the works regardless.

## **Can I change my windows and doors to uPVC?**

The majority of conservation areas within the borough feature traditional timber framed sash windows or original crittal windows, which have a positive impact on the appearance of individual buildings and the wider area, as do later replacement windows in a matching material. Original timber doors or replacements in traditional materials make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and will always be preferred.

The change of windows and doors to an unlisted single residential dwelling or HMO is considered to be permitted development. However, the legislation states that when it comes to such works, the materials used must be of a similar appearance to those used in the original construction of the dwelling house. The design of the replacements should also be similar in terms of glazing pattern and style. Therefore, plastic looking windows and doors are not likely to be acceptable replacements to timber or crittal windows or timber doors as they do not replicate the traditional construction detail or materials found in the conservation area.

It is encouraged that residents retain and repair existing original timber or crittal windows and doors wherever possible. This is best for the environment, for the character and appearance of the area, and is often a more inexpensive solution to

complete replacement. Simple modifications can often be carried out internally which improves the weatherproofing of a door or window without impacting its external appearance.

If replacement windows are required, all aspects of the window should be considered including opening type, glazing bar pattern, horns to sashes, and depth. We would also encourage the use of secondary glazing as it forms an unobtrusive option that increases efficiency without the need to replace original windows.

Replacement timber frames are not only the most appropriate option, but a natural material which helps reduce the use of single-use plastics, often found in other windows.

Timber windows also have the benefit of being more cost effective, being much more durable and repairable than alternatives, and there are options to maintain their appearance while introducing energy saving and noise reducing features. Double and triple glazing can be inserted into timber frames which help maintain a consistent appearance with the benefits to secondary glazing or uPVC but with a more visually acceptable appearance that is unlikely to require planning permission.

If a replacement door is required, then it should match the original door of the property or be sufficiently similar in material and style as per the conditions of legislation. Existing styles of doors in the area generally manage to reflect the architectural style in which they are set, and original examples make a great contribution to the character of the area.

Please note that flats and houses converted to flats do not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore planning permission will always be needed to change doors and windows.

If you are in any doubt that the replacement windows and doors are sufficiently similar to the existing to meet the threshold of permitted development, it is recommended to seek a Lawful Development Certificate. This is not the same as planning permission but is proof that your household building work is lawful. Alternatively, you can contact us for more detailed advice through the [pre-application process](#).

Those living in a conservation area where an Article 4 Direction is in place must always seek planning permission from the council.

## **Can I take down my front wall to create a hardstanding to park my car?**

Planning permission is required to remove a front boundary wall over one metre in height where it fronts the highway or footpath and are not likely to be permitted if it is considered harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is due to the sense of enclosure and consistency of the front boundary treatments, many of which can be original to the property.

Permission is also required from the council if the works require a dropped kerb and changes to the pavement in front of the property.

## **Does conservation area designation affect trees?**

Trees within conservation areas form an important part of its character and appearance and may also form part of a Registered Historic Park and Garden. As such, they are protected as part of the designation. Anyone wishing to undertake any works to cut down or prune a tree within a conservation area (not protected by a Tree Preservation Order) are required to give us six weeks prior written notice using a section 211 notice. View [planning application forms](#).

We have six weeks to notify you if we object. If we object to proposed works, we must make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to extend the protection to the trees. If you do not hear from us after the given time frame, then you can undertake the planned works.

Many trees within conservation areas are also subject to a Tree Preservation Order, which protect trees, groups of trees or woodlands of high amenity value. A TPO application must be submitted to us for any works to a tree covered by a TPO. This covers felling, pruning, and root pruning.

Carrying out works to a TPO tree or trees in a conservation area without the necessary permission is a criminal offence and could result in criminal proceedings being brought against the property owner or those carrying out the works.

See [Trees in Ealing](#) for further information.

## **Can I undertake works in a conservation area to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions?**

The council acknowledges the pressing need for energy efficiency and carbon reduction as set out in [Ealing's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy](#). The installation of more energy efficient windows and doors will be considered on their merits taking into account the guidance above about 'like for like' replacements. The

installation of solar panels, photovoltaics, ground source heat pumps, wind turbines, sedum roofs and external wall insulation are becoming increasingly common in response to climate change. Permitted development rights cover some installations, but there are restrictions within Cas, for example solar PV, solar thermal equipment and domestic wind turbines cannot be installed on a roof or wall which fronts a highway. Where planning permission is required, the impact on the special interest of buildings within the CA will need to be carefully assessed and minimised. Each case will be treated on its merits having regard to the balance between the benefits of carbon reduction and visual impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Some general guidance on these installations is provided in our [Generic Management Plan](#). Other more detailed guidance and references can be found in Historic England's publications on adapting to climate change including [Insulation Walls in Historic Buildings](#) and the most recent update to the [Essex Design Guide](#) also provides practical guidance.

## **How do I find out if my property is affected by an Article 4 Direction?**

You can view [conservation areas which are subject to Article 4 directions](#). These include a link to the relevant details of the Direction.

It is important to check the relevant works which are subject to the Article 4 Direction for the particular conservation area. Some of the directions may only cover certain parts of the conservation area and may be limited to certain works. It is also helpful to refer to the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, which will provide guidance on what might be considered acceptable in terms of alterations and improvements that are subject to the relevant direction, such as changing windows and doors.

As part of the proposals to create a new conservation area at Northfields, and expansion of certain parts of other existing conservation areas, the council's intention is also to introduce Article 4 Directions later. See the [consultation reports for individual conservation area proposals](#). However, it is important to note that that the process for introducing an Article 4 Direction is different from the process for designating a conservation area, and will not come in to effect until the council has confirmed the Article 4 Directions. Prior to confirming the Article 4 Directions the council will invite you to make representations after which the council may or may not decide to confirm an order and the Secretary of State also has the powers to modify or cancel an order.



## **Further guidance**

Further information on the standards required for development in all conservation areas in the borough is provided in the Generic Management Plan. This will be supplemented where appropriate by specific design guidance for each conservation area in the future. Further guidance on good design practice is also provided in the Housing Design Guide. It is advised that you check with Ealing Council about planning and or building control requirements before commencing any work.