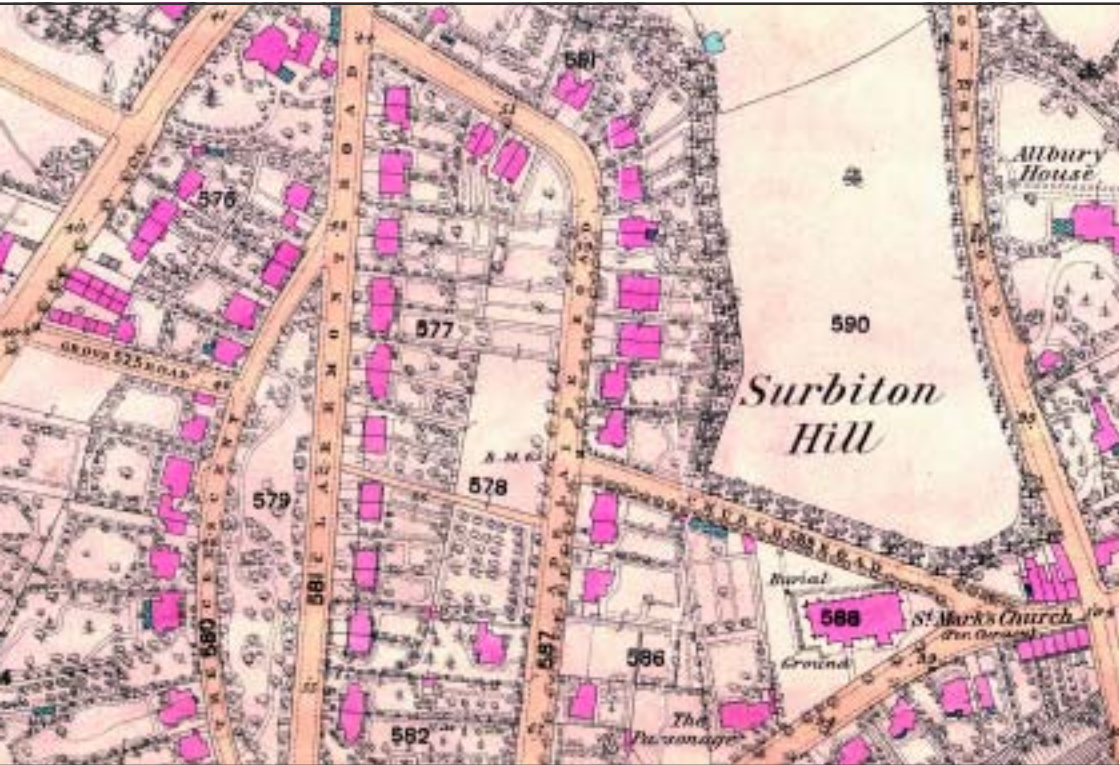


General Guide

Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance



Part of the Claremont Road Conservation Area reproduced from the 1880 Ordnance Survey Map.

The Cabinet formally adopted this guidance in October 2001 following public consultation. It provides planning guidance supplementary to the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in March 1998. The UDP sets out a ten-year framework to steer development in the Borough. Both this guide and the UDP will be used by the Council to assess planning and other types of application for new development in conservation areas. The Built Environment chapter of the UDP contains policies relating to Kingston's conservation areas.

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1. Why read this guide?

If you are the owner or occupier of a property in a conservation area you may benefit from the information in this guide when planning changes to your property. It will also help you to understand proposed alterations to other land or properties in your area. You may not need to read the full guide now, but we suggest that you keep it for future reference.

This guide explains the background to the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies, sets out the principles of the law, and gives good practice guidance for consideration when preparing changes to land or property in a conservation area. The information is relevant to Kingston's conservation areas, but not specific to any one area. Our complementary guide titled "**Conservation Areas - Summary Guide**" identifies the individual areas and provides a summary of their character. In addition we have a guide available for each individual conservation area in the Royal Borough.

2 What is a Conservation Area?

'Conservation Area' means that the special architectural or historic interest of a designated area is safeguarded. It is the general ambience or character of an area as a whole, rather than the individual buildings, which are protected.

The power to designate conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act). Here a conservation area is defined as an area "of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (Section 69).

3 Why do we have Conservation Areas?

Modern society has evolved and changed at an incredible rate over the past fifty years, which has brought about increased pressure on all aspects of the historic environment.

The pattern of growth of the Royal Borough, over many centuries, has created numerous local identities, shaping the distinctive townscapes we see today. It is therefore important that areas and groups of buildings that have special qualities are identified and protected. Conservation areas are the means of preserving the familiar and cherished local scene. It is socially and culturally just as important as the preservation of national landmarks, and individual architectural masterpieces.

Conservation areas are pleasant places to visit, live and work in, and most people welcome the fact that the Council, and the public, are taking special care of the qualities of such areas.



A familiar part of Kingston Old Town Conservation Area.

Conservation area controls and policies ensure that their character will be preserved or enhanced, for the continued enjoyment of present and future residents. Therefore, conservation areas should be identified and monitored to ensure that their special qualities are not diminished by individual changes, which may collectively undermine their character. In the main, conservation areas generate a stable and secure built environment to the benefit of all sections of the community.

4 How is an area designated?

Kingston Council as the local planning authority normally designates conservation areas, although Central Government can also make a designation. Policy BE2 of the UDP identifies potential conservation areas, called Local Areas of Special Character. It is from this list that future conservation areas are most likely to be drawn. The Council committee considers a written and visual assessment of an area's character. If the area is worthy of consideration, property owners/occupiers and interested amenity groups are normally consulted. The same committee then reviews the proposed designation in the light of the consultation responses, and if the designation is agreed, resolve to carry out the legal process to designate a conservation area. In addition, the designation is a local land charge, which would be revealed as part of a Local Authority Search and other enquiries. Existing property owners are normally sent a letter confirming the designation. The law does not contain any powers of appeal against a designation.

5 The character of Kingston's Conservation Areas.

The definition of a conservation area (Section 2) allows wide local interpretation. Kingston's conservation areas include the commercial parts of medieval Kingston and victorian Surbiton, a medieval rural hamlet at Old Malden, and many victorian residential areas. The only common feature between these areas is that they have special qualities, which can be clearly defined.

In recent years a full appraisal of each conservation area's qualities has been included in the designation report to the Council Committee, but for some areas detailed appraisals are still being drawn up (see Section 12). These character appraisals form the basis for assessing planning applications in conservation areas, and guide other decisions and actions.

Our complementary guide titled **“Conservation Areas - Summary Guide”** illustrates the designated conservation areas on a plan of the Borough, with some basic facts, and a brief summary of the character of each area. Each conservation area is illustrated in more detail in our **Individual Conservation Area leaflets**. These are available from the Environmental



Photo by J.R. South

Historic interest characteristic of Coombe House Conservation Area.

Services Reception at Guildhall 2, and on the council website at www.kingston.gov.uk.

6 The national context.

Over 8000 conservation areas have been designated in England. The laws contained in The Act (see Section 2) are expanded by Government advice and administrative requirements set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (1994), "**Planning and the Historic Environment**", Circular 14/97, "**Planning and the Historic Environment**", and Circular 01/01 "**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications**".

Both the Government and the Council may draw on advice from English Heritage, who assist and monitor the designation and management of conservation areas, and have a legal role in some planning applications. English Heritage has issued guidance to local planning authorities in leaflets titled "**Conservation Area Practice**" (Oct. 95) and "**Conservation Area Appraisals**" (March 97).

7 The local context.

It is the Built Environment chapter (BE) of the UDP which contains policies relating specifically to Kingston's conservation areas. This was subject to wide public consultation, and has been formally adopted, so there is a legal requirement to take it into consideration when determining planning applications. The whole document can be inspected or purchased at the Environmental Services Reception, in Guildhall 2, or at local libraries. The key policies are BE3 and BE4, (for full supporting text see the UDP).

BE3 Development in Conservation Areas

The Council will give special attention to the design of development proposals within or adjoining conservation areas. In such instances the Council will:-

Resist the loss of buildings, trees and other features that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area,

and

Permit development and redevelopment only where the proposed development is of a high design standard and would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

BE4 Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas

The Council will resist the loss of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area and will only grant consent for the demolition of other buildings where approval has already been given for satisfactory redevelopment of the site.

Other policies in this leaflet are referred to by their policy reference number. Reference is also made to existing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), relevant to conservation areas (available from the Environmental Services Reception at Guildhall 2). SPG that has been subject to public consultation and formally adopted by the Council carries significant weight in assessing planning applications.



A pleasant place to live - Richmond Road Conservation Area.

8 The Council's duties.

Once a conservation area has been formally designated the Council's obligations include the following: -

- To pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area when exercising any planning power (Section 72, The Act). This includes decisions on planning and advertisement applications, the use of enforcement procedures, and the offer of historic building grants.
- To formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and submit them for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate (Section 71, The Act). The publication of a Character Appraisal and a Conservation Area Study for each conservation area will be the basis for a strategic approach to this duty (see Section 12). Many local projects have been carried out in conservation areas, and some publications have been produced.



An environmental enhancement scheme- Surbiton Town Centre Conservation Area.

- To publicise and consult on planning and other types of applications (Section 73, The Act). Applications that would affect the character or appearance of a conservation area are advertised in the Public Notice section of a local newspaper, currently the Surrey Comet, and in a notice positioned near the site of the proposed development. This promotes public involvement in conservation matters, and provides an opportunity for people to give their views to the Council before it makes a decision.
- To make available resources to ensure the above duties can be satisfied (The Act & PPG 15). This includes specialist conservation advisors to guide the Council's decisions, and to assist property owners and occupiers, and other members of the public. Conservation Officers (see Section 13) give advice on all historic environment issues free of charge.

9 The controls on land and properties.

The Council's obligation to preserve an area's character or appearance is achieved through extra controls over new building works and other forms of development. These do not apply outside conservation areas. The increased controls should result in more careful consideration by all involved, and a higher standard of design and materials, which will have the long-term benefits explained in Section 3. The Government establishes the extra controls, and they automatically apply following the formal designation of a conservation area. Kingston's policy follows the national controls and they cover the following types of works:

Demolition works:

Conservation area consent is required from the Council for the total or substantial demolition of any building which exceeds 115 cubic metres (measured externally), and any free-standing wall or fence 1m or more high next to a highway or 2m high elsewhere. Demolition without consent is an offence, and the Council can take action to get the demolished structure rebuilt. Demolition of part of a building or structure does not currently require



The positive contribution trees make to the character of an area - Southborough Conservation Area.

consent, but the subsequent making good of the building may require planning permission.

Conservation area consent is still required for total or substantial demolition of a building even if a Dangerous Structures Notice is served under the Building Act 1984, section 78. See Policy BE4 (Section 7), and Conservation Area Consent (Section 10).

Works to trees:

Anyone proposing to carry out works to a tree in a conservation area, which is not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), needs to give the Council six weeks written notification. This should identify the tree, and the proposed works. This applies to surgery works, such as lopping branches, changing the shape, or felling of any tree with a trunk over 75mm in diameter measured 1.5m above ground level, except fruit trees and dead, dying or dangerous trees. The notice period enables an

assessment of whether a TPO should be made. Providing a TPO is not made, the works may be carried out either when the Council writes to give permission or six weeks after the owner's letter to the Council. It is a criminal offence not to follow this procedure prior to carrying out tree works, and to destroy a tree as a consequence of wilful damage. The planting of a replacement tree can be required. See Policy BE3 (Section 7) & BE9, and Trees (Section 10).

Alterations and extensions:

The present system in England says that major works need planning permission from the Council but many minor works do not, and are therefore called "permitted development". The categories of "permitted development" are set out in The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. This guide cannot give a full account of the law. Simple guidance to give the background is found in "**Planning: A Guide for Householders**" (Department of Environment, Transport & Regions Sept. 2000) and "**Planning Permission: A Guide for Business**" (Department of Environment, Transport & Regions May. 2000) available from the Environmental Services reception at Guildhall 2.

The Government sets more restrictive "permitted development rights" for conservation areas, as it does for other sensitive area such as National Parks. The Council may also remove some "permitted development rights" by issuing an "Article 4 Direction", which would be identified in an individual conservation area guide.

Restrictions on permitted development in conservation areas are: -

1. The amount of building works that can be carried out to a dwelling house or in its grounds without planning permission is substantially smaller. The illustration on pages 16 and 17 gives examples of the type of work within the grounds of a dwelling house that would require planning permission.

- Some of the limitations on works are the same as outside conservation areas, i.e. porches, and fences and walls.

- Other types of work in conservation areas, always require permission where they do not elsewhere, i.e. most works to the roof and external cladding of walls.
 - Consent is often required for smaller size development than outside conservation areas, i.e. extensions and outbuildings
2. Extensions to industrial and warehouse buildings are only permitted if they do not add more than 10% of the volume of the original building or 500 square metres to its aggregate floor space.
 3. Satellite and telecommunications equipment is under greater control on all types of properties. Simple guidance is found in **“A Householder’s Planning Guide for the Installation of Satellite Television Dishes”** (Department of Environment, Transport & Regions March 2000) available from the Environmental Services reception at Guildhall 2. Also, the illustration on the centre pages gives an indication of the location of a satellite dish on a dwelling house that does require planning permission.



Central Government leaflets on planning controls.

4. The limitation for minor works on the site of a school, college, university or hospital is the same as in other areas, providing the materials used are of a similar appearance to the original building.
5. The limitation for close circuit television cameras installed on any building is the same as other areas providing the camera is sited to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building.

The above controls require an interpretation for each site and unique proposals. A formal ruling to confirm that works are permitted development can be obtained by applying for a "Lawful Development Certificate". If proposed works do require planning permission the good practice guidance contained in Section 10 is the best starting point, before instructing an agent and discussing the works with the local planning authority. Works above the permitted development limits will receive planning permission if they preserve or enhance the character of their conservation area. See policy BE3 Sections 7 and 10.

Advertisements:

Consent is required in conservation areas before any illuminated sign, and certain other signs are displayed. For further guidance on the types of signs which require Advertisement Consent see the publication "**Outdoor Advertisements and Signs**" (Department of the Environment 1995), available from the Environmental Services Reception at Guildhall 2. See Policy BE17, Commercial Areas and Section 10.

10 Good practice guidance.

A Conservation Officer can normally offer guidance on practical and technical construction matters for buildings in historic areas.

Guidance on how the general UDP policies apply to individual conservation areas may be contained in an adopted Conservation Area Study (see Section 12), or where none exists, a Conservation Officer should be contacted. When preparing to do works in a conservation area, whether or not they require permission because of the controls described in Section 9, consideration should be given to the relevant good practice in the additional issues set out below:

Planning applications:

A full planning application must be submitted, not an outline application (see BE3, 6.27). The “Notes for Applicant”, supplied with the forms from the Environmental Services Reception at Guildhall 2, describe the kind of information required. It is particularly important in conservation areas to include existing plans and elevations, and to show proposals in the context of the adjacent buildings by including the footprint and outline elevations on your drawings. Applicants are advised to appoint an agent with experience of preparing proposals in conservation areas. The Royal Institute for British Architects (RIBA) has a register of its members in the area, which identifies their expertise. Additional professional expertise may be required for more complex cases such as a surveyor (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, RICS), a structural engineer (Institute of Structural Engineers), or a historic buildings expert (Institute of Historic Building Conservation, IHBC). Telephone numbers are given in Section 13.

Conservation area consent:

Applications for conservation area consent will be considered in the light of national guidance (see Section 6), and Policy BE4 (see Section 7). There is a presumption against demolishing buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a



Charter Quay Market Place - streetscene elevation submitted with a planning application - Kingston Old Town Conservation Area.

conservation area. Applications for the demolition of such a building need to be accompanied by a financial appraisal of the feasibility of reusing the building for its existing use or an alternative use. This may include the potential for new buildings on the same site if the feasibility of retaining the building is not otherwise viable (see PPG15 paragraphs 4.27 & 3.16-19). The UDP policies on change of use may be applied flexibly if an alternative use of a building is necessary to avoid the loss of the building. Where a building makes a neutral or negative contribution to the character or appearance of an area, a statement to that effect should form part of any application for its demolition. If demolition is proposed, a Conservation Officer should be consulted at an early stage for advice on the contribution that the building makes to an area. An adopted Character Appraisal (see Section 12) may give such guidance. Generally, consent for demolition will only be granted when accompanied by an acceptable proposal for redevelopment. The timing of demolition will be carefully controlled to ensure new development follows on to avoid an unattractive vacant site.

Commercial areas:

These areas are inevitably subject to greater pressures for change. For further guidance on planning permission see the publication "**A Guide for Business**" (Department of the Environment 1994) available from the Environmental Services Reception at Guildhall 2. Shopfronts and shop signs should be subject to high standards, and satisfy the SPG "**Shopfronts & Shopsigns**" (1991) standards for conservation areas, and BE16 & 17. Signs should be designed in scale with the buildings in the area, and be unobtrusive in the streetscene. Illuminated signs are unlikely to be appropriate in conservation areas unless they are in a part that is predominantly commercial in character.

It is equally important to give attention to upper floors and elevations (see H4 & KTC5); maintaining the fabric of the whole building; and ensuring rear elevations, outside yards, and side views do not become burdened with rubbish storage, and modern additions such as mechanical plant and ducts (see BE13).

Air conditioning units and ventilation ducts should be either

You must get permission to carry out any of the work indicated here if you live in a single dwelling house within a conservation area.

Roof alterations or any works which will materially alter the shape of the roof require permission (including raised rooflights and dormers).

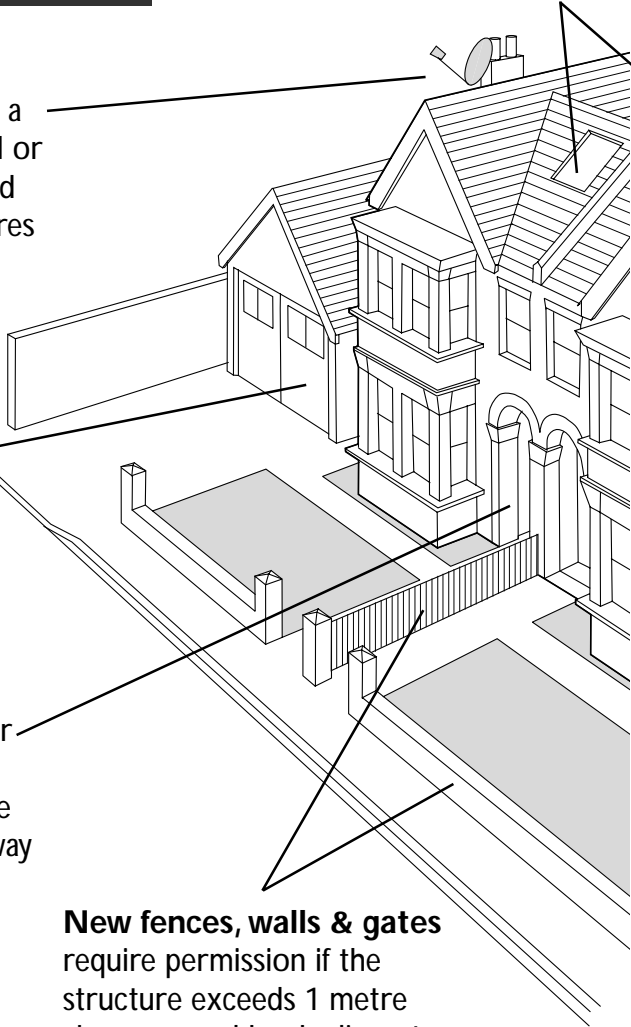
Satellite dishes sited on a chimneystack, or on a wall or roofslope fronting the road or a public footpath requires permission.

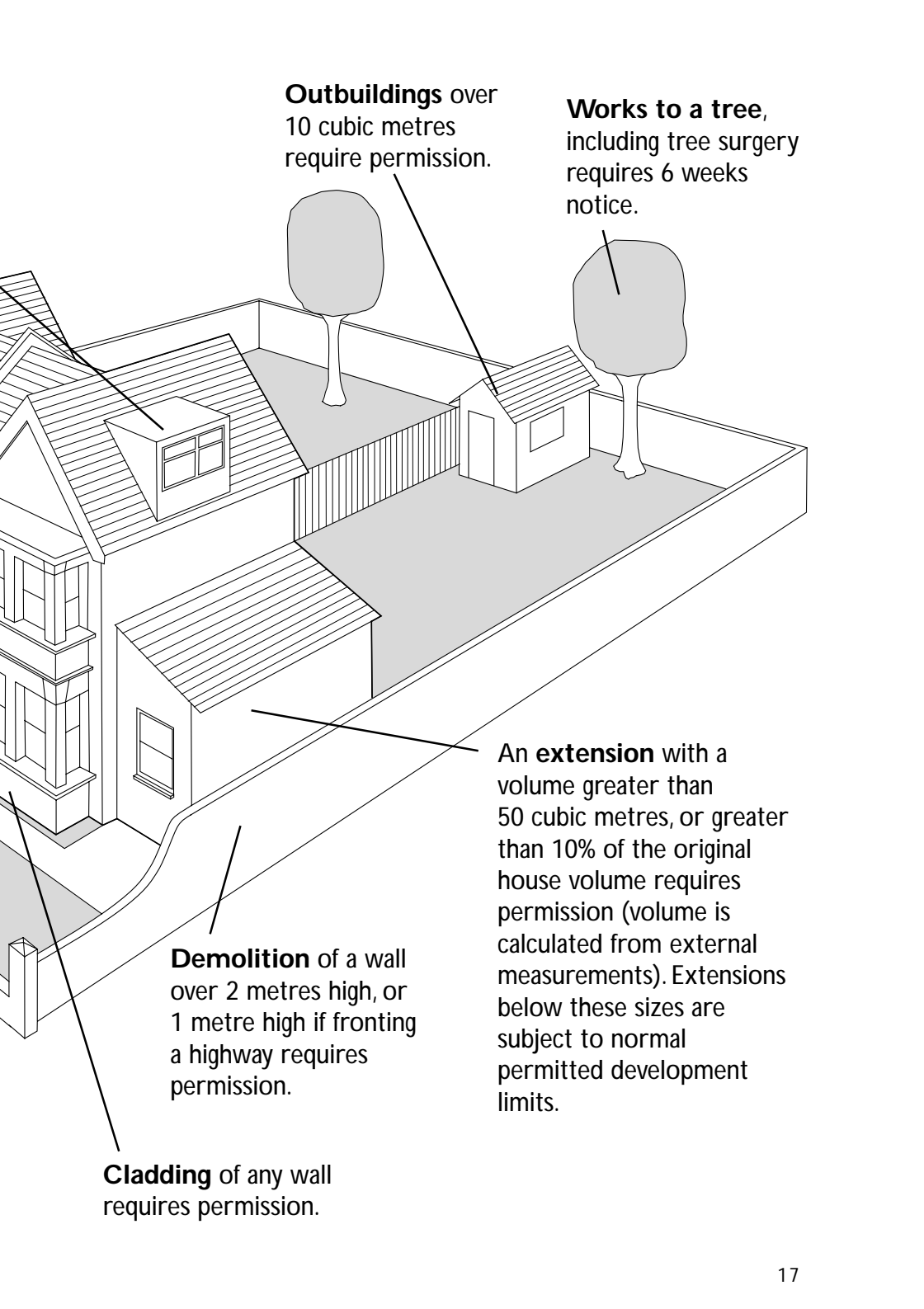
Demolition of a building over 115 cubic metres requires conservation area consent.

Porches larger than 3 metres square, higher than 3 metres, or less than 2 metres from the boundary with a highway require permission.

New fences, walls & gates require permission if the structure exceeds 1 metre above ground level adjacent to a highway used for vehicles, or 2 metres above ground level elsewhere.

Note: see "Planning - a guide for householders" for full details of permitted development limits and controls.





Outbuildings over 10 cubic metres require permission.

Works to a tree, including tree surgery requires 6 weeks notice.

An **extension** with a volume greater than 50 cubic metres, or greater than 10% of the original house volume requires permission (volume is calculated from external measurements). Extensions below these sizes are subject to normal permitted development limits.

Demolition of a wall over 2 metres high, or 1 metre high if fronting a highway requires permission.

Cladding of any wall requires permission.

contained within a building, located in a concealed position, or designed as an integral part of the building.

Changes of use:

The predominance of a single type of use, or the mix of uses, may be important to an area's character. Some uses generate distinct patterns of pedestrian or vehicular activity, have characteristic hours of operation, generate a unique range of noises and smells, and result in related external alterations or additions. A change of use requiring planning permission may be refused on the grounds that it harms the character of an area. Where an existing use is redundant



**A commercial change of use that preserves the area's character -
Surbiton Town Centre Conservation Area.**

or no longer economically viable, the conversion of a building to an appropriate new use is the best option for a building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area.

Trees:

Trees can make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area, and there is a general presumption in favour of keeping them (see policies BE3 & BE9). A tree's contribution will depend on the layout of the area, and trees in rear gardens can be as important as those in more public positions. Planning applications should include an accurate tree survey of all trees in the vicinity of the proposal, identifying their location, species, size, a description of the condition of each tree, and those to be removed or retained. This information will allow the Council to assess the effect of the proposal on the contribution of the trees to the conservation area. New tree planting is often necessary to soften the effects of a development, or to enhance an area. Further information on trees is available in the SPGs "**Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas**" (1995), "**Landscape Design**" (1992), and "**List of Tree Surgeons**". Tree surgery should always be carried out by a competent tree surgeon to British Standard Specification 3998:1989. A Tree Officer (see Section 13) should be contacted for early advice on works affecting existing trees, and it may be recommended that you appoint an independent expert.

Open spaces and views:

The safeguarding of spaces between buildings, particularly those which can be viewed from a normal vantage point, are important to the character of an area (see STR6, BE1 & 3, 6.24, OL9). Within public spaces, such as streets, car parks, and public parks, the geometry of their layouts, the treatment of paving surfaces, street furniture, and landscaping should reinforce the character of the area. In particular clutter should be avoided, and the elements follow a co-ordinated theme that respects the traditional materials and design of the area. Private spaces seen from public ones, such as forecourts, front gardens, and private car parks, should follow the same principle. Views across both private and public spaces should preserve the contribution of a prominent building or feature, or any

other scene that has evolved as part of a cherished and familiar landscape.

New buildings:

In some conservation areas there will be opportunities for infill developments, and to replace buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the area. There is no standard formula for the design of a new building in a conservation area, although for some key development sites guidelines (see UDP Chapter 15), or an approved planning brief may have been prepared to offer advice. All proposals should satisfy policies BE3, 11, 12 & 14. The starting point should be to understand the character and appearance of the whole area (or the relevant part of it), and not just the buildings immediately surrounding the site. All proposals should demonstrate that the following characteristic elements within the area have been considered: -

- building lines and layouts;
- scale, height, form and massing
- roof forms and roof materials;
- respect for the traditional pattern of frontages, including the scale and proportions of the individual elements;
- materials and colour;

The most appropriate architectural style will depend on the uniformity of the area and the creativity of the designer. Faithful reproduction of existing buildings could be the right approach where uniformity is very strong. The best approach, particularly for domestic buildings, normally involves using the elements listed in a traditional manner to produce a building that is uncompromisingly modern but still blends with the character of the area.

Extensions:

Many buildings can accommodate an extension without it dominating the existing property, or undermining a feature that is important to the character or appearance of the area. Further guidance is contained in the SPG "**Residential Extensions**" (1982). Schemes will need to satisfy Policies BE3, 11 & 12. Generally the size and positioning of an appropriate extension can

be determined by considering: -

- the importance of the gaps between buildings in the area
- the value of any trees that would need to be removed
- whether the extension remains subordinate to the existing property

The detailing of all extensions should respect the host building by incorporating the following features: -

- a roof form which compliments the main roof
- appropriately proportioned and spaced window and door openings
- architectural detailing to match the age and style of the property
- matching materials with particular attention to brick bond, mortar colour and pointing style

Getting the details right will make a successful extension.



Open spaces and views - Old Malden Conservation Area.

External alterations:

Works that may individually be considered to be a minor alteration may appear harmless in isolation, but cumulatively they can detract from the character of an area, and the appearance of a property. You can get advice on minor works (not requiring permission), such as the appropriate detailing for doors, windows, walls, and front garden paths from a Conservation Officer.

Planning permission will be required for any external alteration to a building which is not a single family dwelling if the works materially alter the external appearance. Works which require planning permission will be considered in the context of the policies outlined in Sections 6 and 7, any other relevant UDP policy, and any Character Appraisal or Conservation Area Study (see Section 12).

Window replacement, in both flats and commercial properties, with a frame of a different design or material is likely to need permission. Timber sliding sash frames are characteristic of many of the Borough's conservation areas and their replacement with alternative designs and UPVC mock sashes is particularly damaging to the appearance of an area (see Maintenance & Repairs below). The creation of new openings should follow the guidance given for extensions.

Roof and chimney alterations are normally controversial as they can have a wide impact on a streetscene. It may be acceptable to use an attic space by inserting dormer windows providing they are designed to sit well within the roof slope, in from the eaves and below the ridge. The use of an inverted dormer or roof lights may be acceptable providing the scale of the openings in the roof slope does not undermine the appearance of the roof slope, and is restricted to rear slopes. Rooflights should be of a type which are flush with the roof covering to minimise their impact. Chimney stacks in prominent locations should be retained.

Porches should relate symmetrically to the door opening, be clear of adjacent windows, and have a simple roof form to relate to the main roof or a bay window. Often an open canopy is less obtrusive and fulfils the same function of weather protection.

Ancillary buildings:

The design of small buildings that are ancillary to the main property should reinforce the character of an area. Generally, garages should be constructed in materials to match the main property and incorporate a pitched roof. However it is quite characteristic of many historic areas for outbuildings such as sheds and greenhouses to be constructed from timber or glass. Over-large structures and modern materials can threaten views within conservation areas and across private spaces. Covered swimming pools pose a particular modern dilemma but can normally be sensitively handled if treated as a glasshouse or conservatory structure.

Front gardens, and walls and fences:

The treatment of gardens and boundaries fronting a highway cumulatively can have the single biggest impact on the character of an area (see BE3 & 12). Trees and shrubs in front gardens and front boundaries enclosed with fences or walls are what give street



Good examples of new porches - Old Malden Conservation Area.

scenes a coherent and pleasing appearance. Where the rhythm of plot widths and boundary treatment is particularly strong the original design should be retained or reinstated. Surviving parts of original boundaries can normally be identified to determine the appropriate treatment. Railings or panelled walls were generally used in the Victorian period, but in the Edwardian period these gave way to close-boarded timber fences. A new boundary wall or fence that is over-grand for an area or excessively high can destroy the areas appearance if repeated too often, while high walls reduce intervisibility and personal security (see BE15). Planning permission is needed for walls or fences over 1m high fronting a highway or path, and 2m high elsewhere.



Boundary treatments

The use of small front gardens for parking cars and the creation of a gap in the boundary enclosure will affect the character of an area, especially if the hardstanding dominates the frontage (see BE12). As a general rule the front garden should be large enough to allow a car to be parked at right angles to the road, whilst allowing sufficient space to enable front gates to open inwards and to accommodate planting. Sympathetic materials should be used for the hard surface. Crossovers will need to be approved by the Council as Highway Authority (see Contacts Section 13), and may need planning permission. They should be carefully positioned avoiding the removal of grass verges (see BE10); be separated from adjoining crossovers; and be of the minimum width. The material for crossovers should promote the historic character of the area.

Repairs and maintenance:

Maintaining the fabric of a building makes both practical and economic sense. Unsympathetic repairs and replacement of features can destroy the harmonious appearance of a terrace or a group of houses. This guide cannot give detailed advice on this subject, but general rules can be suggested. These include: -

- Repair and redecorate every 5-7 years
- Follow the philosophy of repairing rather than replacing the existing original fabric
- Reinstatate altered materials and details with those original to the building
- Use professional advisers to diagnose defects
- Avoid being influenced by manufactures' and suppliers' high pressure techniques for selling inappropriate products
- Use a contractor with a reputation for doing similar work and inspect their previous workmanship, The Guild of Master Craftsmen, or Federation of Master Builders can advise who is registered in the areas (see advertisements in Yellow Pages including their symbols and contacts in Section 13).

Window replacements are the most serious threat to the appearance of our conservation areas, and often affect the value of properties. The replacement of timber double hung sash windows

with UPVC replacements is likely to result in several problems:-

- The material cannot reproduce the profiles and details of joinery
- The variety can destroy the harmony of the sash design within a streetscape
- They are not as easy and economic to repair as timber;
- Their life expectancy is not tested in the same way as timber;
- They do not have the bio-degradable qualities of timber when redundant, creating an environmental land fill hazard.

Other repairs that can have a detrimental impact include: -

- Alterations to roofing materials
- Inappropriate repointing techniques
- Painting, rendering or cladding of brickwork
- Removing architectural features such as decorative stone and window surrounds
- Installing modern plastic rainwater gutters and downpipes



Comparison of a UPVC casement with an original timber sash.

All the above works can undermine the appearance of a property, and consequently the character of an area. Careful repairs are just as important as more major alterations and extensions.

Enforcement action:

If building works or changes of use are undertaken without planning permission, and they result in damage to the character or appearance of a conservation area, the Council will normally investigate with a view to serving an Enforcement Notice to reverse the unauthorised changes. It is therefore advisable to ensure all the relevant consents have been obtained before any works or new uses are commenced. Other powers are available to the Council in cases of: -

- failure to comply with conditions on a planning permission;
- untidy land;
- vacant buildings in a poor condition.

11 Conservation Areas Advisory Committees (CAAC`s)

There are currently two independent bodies committed to working with the Council on conservation area matters, made up of representatives for each conservation area and local amenity bodies, and comprise a cross section of local people who are often either professionally or voluntarily involved in the built environment. The CAAC`s advise on planning and advertisement applications, comment on Council projects, monitor activity in their areas, and make suggestions for improvements.

If you wish to get more involved in your conservation area, contact the representative for the area, or the CAAC Chairman. A Conservation Officer can provide contact details, and advise you if you are thinking about starting an amenity group for a specific area, or developing an existing residents' association to be more involved in an area. Conservation areas need committed and knowledgeable guardians.

12 The future for Kingston`s Conservation Areas

Conservation areas need careful management if their character is to be safeguarded for the future. The next stage is for the Council to produce and work to "A Conservation Area Management Plan" which will identify the programme and process for managing all designated conservation areas. Each area needs individual attention, but priority must be given to those areas under most threat from changes, or those designated earliest. The "Management Plan" will take guidance from English Heritage's "Conservation Area Practice", & "Conservation Area Appraisals" (see Section 6). This guidance recommends a two-stage process of action. Stage one is the preparation of a "Character Appraisal" for each area, defining and analysing its character and appearance (see comment in Section 8). This will form a sound basis for applying the UDP policies, and for development control decisions. Stage two should build on the "Character Appraisal" leading to the publication of supplementary planning guidance in a "Conservation Area Study" for each area. This "Study" should contain initiatives, proposals,



A familiar and cherished scene - Kingston Old Town Conservation Area.

and policies to promote the future preservation or enhancement of the area. Public consultation is vital to adopting a successful "Conservation Area Study" to ensure that those involved in its operation are aware and committed to it.

Inappropriate examples of past development in conservation areas will not justify inappropriate development in the future. The emphasis will be on safeguarding all buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of an area, and welcoming opportunities to improve or replace buildings or sites which detract from the character of an area.

The key to the future of Kingston's conservation areas is that property owners and occupiers assume responsibility for ensuring that even the smallest repair or alteration preserves or enhances the character or appearance of each conservation area. Please help the Council preserve the familiar and cherished local scenes that create happy places for everyone's enjoyment.

13 Contacts and further information

The Council

A Planning Officer is available for general advice at Guildhall 2, 2nd floor reception between 10 am - 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Alternatively, please use the following contacts to seek telephone advice or to make an appointment. Other contacts can be found in the "A-Z Guide to Kingston Council Services" available in libraries and Council offices:-

- A Conservation Officer: 020 8547 4706/4652/5316/5359
- A Planning Officer: 020 8547 4696/7
- A Tree Officer:- 020 8547 5506
- Traffic/Highway matters (Customer Services):- 020 8547 5929
- Vehicle crossovers:- 020 8547 5979
- Building Regulations:- 020 8547 4699/4701
- Kingston Web Site and ISIS: - www.kingston.gov.uk

External bodies that may be of assistance for specific enquiries

- Royal Institute of British Architects:- 020 7580 5533
www.architecture.com
- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors:- 0870 333 1600
www.rics.org.uk
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation (Secretary):-
3 Stafford Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 4QZ-
www.ihbc.org.uk
- Institute of Structural Engineers (referrals): -020 7235 4535 -
www.istructe.org.uk
- Chartered Institute of Building: - 01344 630 700 -
www.ciob.org.uk
- Guild of Master Craftsmen:- 01273 478499 -
www.guildmc.com
- Federation of Master Builders:- 020 7242 7583 -
www.fmb.org.uk
- Royal Town Planning Institute: - 020 7929 9494 -
www.rtpi.org.uk
- Conservation Register (of specialist contractors) 020 7233 3683 -
www.museums.gov.uk
- The Building Conservation Directory :- Cathedral Communication 01747 871717
www.buildingconservation.com
- The Register of Architects accredited in Building Conservation - 01625 523 784
www.AABC-register.co.uk
- English Heritage:- 020 7973 3000 (main number), 020 7973 3434 (Publications) -
www.english-heritage.org.uk
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings -

www.spab.org.uk

- Victorian Society -
www.victorian-society.org.uk
- CABI -
www.cabi.org.uk
- Urban Design Alliance (UDAL) -
www.udal.org.uk

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