

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas 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.

Once an area has been designated as a conservation area, any works which require planning permission within a conservation area become subject to local conservation policies set out in our Local Plan and national policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As the Local Planning Authority, Babergh District Council’s overarching duty, as set out in the Act, is to preserve or enhance the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area.

Babergh currently contains 30 conservation areas which range from ancient manorial land north of the village of Bentley through to most of the village of Long Melford and large parts of Sudbury and Hadleigh Town Centres.

What is a Conservation Area Appraisal [“CAA”]?

Conservation Area Appraisals within Babergh are ultimately agreed by Babergh District Council but can involve significant community input in initial drafting. Babergh District Council has been pioneering an scheme whereby the initial drafting of CAAMPs is undertaken by Parish Councils and the community. The Bentley CAAMP 2025 was the first of this type to be agreed and others are underway in Sproughton and East Bergholt.

A CAA seeks to describe the special architectural and historic character of the conservation area and those positive elements which are encouraged to be conserved. The document seeks 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.

What is a Conservation Area Management Plan [“MP”]?

This provides 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. A Management Plan for the Sproughton Conservation Area will follow.

Once agreed a CAAMP becomes part of the suit of documents that help the Council to decide planning applications within and adjacent to Conservation Areas.

**permitted development*

Permitted Development (PD) rights in the UK allow homeowners and developers to carry out certain building works or changes of use (like extending a house or converting a shop to a home) without needing full planning permission from the local authority, provided specific conditions, size limits, and criteria are met. These national rules, set out in the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO), cover things like home extensions, loft conversions, porches, outbuildings, and some commercial property changes, aiming to simplify minor developments while protecting local amenity. However, these rights can be removed, and some projects require a "prior approval" process with the local council, so checking local rules and guidelines is crucial.





What does the ‘designation’ [*the formal creation*] of a Conservation Area mean if I live in or own a business in a Conservation Area?

Conservation area designation gives Babergh District Council additional planning control over certain works to buildings within the boundary, which are set out below.

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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.

Permitted Development Rights

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO) sets out permitted development rights (PDR) 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 are restricted within conservation areas and planning permission is then needed for some works which affect the external appearance of the building. Those applicable to single residential dwellings are included on document 2c. 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 regardless.





Some permitted development rights 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 regardless.

- . 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/windows)

The above list is not exhaustive. When considering applications for planning permission within a conservation area, Babergh District Council 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.

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



Furthermore, some conservation areas are subject to an Article 4(2) Direction, which removes certain permitted development rights.

No Article 4 Direction is currently being proposed within the Sproughton CA

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 unchanged by being within a conservation area and therefore planning permission is not required, unless an Article 4 (2) Direction has been introduced within the conservation area which restricts such works.

However, we would not encourage the painting of historic unpainted façades, such as unpainted brick, boarding and/or stone. We also advise care in choosing colours for render/plaster as the Council would hope you use a colour from the traditional Suffolk palette.

Can I clad the outside walls to my house?

Cladding is a material or layer applied to the external walls of a building. The primary functions of cladding are to provide insulation, aesthetic changes, and protection for the existing walls. We would not encourage the replacement of historic cladding on any historic building with a different type/material. Cladding a non-historic building in the conservation area may be acceptable, subject to the proposed materials.

Does conservation area designation affect trees?

Trees within conservation areas form an important part of its character and appearance. 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 [“TPO”]) are required to give us six weeks prior written notice using a section 211 notice.

Babergh District Council has six weeks to notify you if we object. 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.