

HIGH WYCOMBE CONSERVATION AREA

HIGH WYCOMBE FAQ

These questions are frequently asked during consultation. The document below provides brief answers and directs you to the relevant sections of the Conservation Area Appraisal which can be found in the QR code adjacent:



What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is defined as an area 'of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

See [Section 1 p.5](#) for further information.

What is the current boundary of the Conservation Area

The current conservation area boundary can be viewed via this link: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-andbuilding-control/conservation-heritage-and-archaeology/heritage/conservation-areas-in-buckinghamshire/> It is also available to view in [Section 1 pp.6-7](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Has the Boundary of the Conservation Area been changed as part of this review?

Yes. Over time Conservation Areas evolve and the characteristics which underpins their special interest may evolve or decrease in their integrity because of gradual alteration. It is therefore important to review and take stock of the character of a Conservation Area periodically to ensure designation is still suitable and that the proper management of future change is in place.

See [Section 7](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal for more information.

What is a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan?

A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan defines and records the special interest of a Conservation Area, analyses the characteristics that make it special, as well as setting out a plan for managing change to ensure its ongoing protection and enhancement.

See [Section 1 p.8](#)

How does the Conservation Area designation affected changes permitted to my property?

Conservation Area designation aims to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of an area which is of special architectural or historic interest. Therefore changes to the external appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority as certain permitted development rights are curtailed. For example this can include but is not limited to requiring permission to demolish or substantially alter structures, change the external finish of a building, changes to the roofs and extensions.

See [Section 1 p.5](#) and [Section 6 p.87](#) for more detailed information.

How can I get advice about making changes to my property, including if I need planning permission?

As well as guidance in the Conservation Area Appraisal, Buckinghamshire Council has planning policies set out within the Wycombe District Local Plan, due to be replaced with the Buckinghamshire Local Plan. Anyone planning change within the Conservation Area should refer to these policies and ensure their proposals comply with their aims.

Some Permitted Development Rights are removed in Conservation Areas meaning you will need to gain planning permission for certain works that materially affect the external appearance of the buildings. These are set out on [p.86](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal. For further information and advice about when planning permission is required within a



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Conservation Area, see the guidance on the Government's Planning Portal: <https://www.gov.uk/housing-local-andcommunity/planning-and-building>

What are my responsibilities in maintaining my property?

In Conservation Areas it is important that maintenance and repair work is carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of the building and respect and preserve the established character of the wider area. Regular maintenance ensures that small problems do not escalate into larger issues This lessens the need for repair and is therefore cost effective in the long-term.

See [Section 6 p.88-90](#) for more information on regular maintenance.

Is my property within the Conservation Area?

To view if your property is within the boundary, the current conservation area boundary can be viewed via this link: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/conservation-heritage-and-archaeology/heritage/conservation-areas-in-buckinghamshire/>.

It is also available to view in [Section 1 pp.6-7](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The proposed Conservation Area Boundary can be found in [Section 7](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

What is special about the Conservation Area?

The High Wycombe Conservation Area principally has special interest derived from archaeological interest with evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation, the reflection of different phases of development in its street pattern from Saxon through to the twenty-first century, the variety of architecture resulting from the town's importance as a strategic coaching stop, successful milling and paper-making industries and the prolific chair making industry. Historic, visual and aesthetic links with it's the green backdrop of the woodlands also contributes to its special interest as well as its character today as a lively market town.

This is a very brief summary of the special interest of the Conservation Area.

It is discussed in more depth in [Section 2](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Is my property a listed building or locally listed building?

The Conservation Area Appraisal contains a plan highlighting listed and locally listed buildings on [pp6-7](#).

What does it mean if my buildings is locally listed?

Special permission to start alterations or repairs isn't usually needed beyond the standard Conservation Area requirements and permitted development rights still apply. However, when works need planning permission, the local listing helps to acknowledge the historical importance of a building. As a locally listed building it becomes an objective of the NPPF and is a material consideration when deciding the outcome of a planning application.

See [Section 3 p.14](#) for more information.

What are the problems facing the Conservation Area?

Problems facing the Conservation Area are factors which detract from its character and appearance. These include but is not limited to, the poor condition and maintenance of some buildings, inappropriate alterations such as use of uPVC windows, loss



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of traditional gardens in favour of parking, painting over traditionally unpainted brick walls, inappropriate demolition, extension and new development, development negatively impacting setting and views from within the Conservation Area, poorly designed shopfronts and vacancy.

[Section 6 pp.88-120](#) breaks the issues facing the Conservation Area down in more detail.

What are the opportunities to enhance the Conservation Area's special interest?

There is an opportunity for change within the High Wycombe Conservation Area to be planned and carried out in a

considered way which is sympathetic to its special heritage interest. This includes maintaining buildings and the historic environment in good condition, ensuring proposals for extension, alteration, new development and demolition within or in the setting of the Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its special interest through high quality design and construction, open green spaces and bodies of water should be maintained, ensuring that alterations in response to climate change take into consideration the character and appearance of the area, removing inappropriate and unsympathetic elements of buildings and the street scene and reinstating lost historic features.

[Section 6 pp.85-120](#)

How can I understand my property better?

We have a long list of sources on further guidance on p.153 – 155 of the Conservation Area. Reading Section 4 of the Conservation Area Appraisal will also provide a more general understanding of how your property fits into the wider development of the area.

Can I replace my windows and doors?

Yes, if your doors are in poor condition and require replacement, or have been changed to uPVC rather than timber in the past, which are not sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, you can replace your windows and doors with traditional timber units in designs to match as far as possible what would have originally been in place. If it is possible to retain and repair historic windows and doors you should do so rather than replace them.

[Section 6 pp.91-94](#) contains further information on altering buildings within the Conservation Area.

What alterations and extensions are appropriate to my property?

Alterations and extensions should preserve or enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area through quality design and construction which is sympathetic in terms of scale, massing, proportions, materials, detailing and response to local context. Wherever possible historic features such as windows, doors, roof tiles, front gardens and boundary treatments should be retained.

[Section 6 pp. 91-94](#) of the Conservation Area Appraisal provides more information.

What characteristics should new development have within the Conservation Area?

All extensions, alterations and new buildings must be high-quality in terms of design and construction and should be planned with reference to the historic context. This includes but is not limited to consideration of the relationship with adjacent buildings or open spaces, the potential to draw inspiration from the historic use and character of a site, the scale and grain of the



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surrounding area, its height in relation to its neighbours and surrounding context, the potential for it to impact on important views.

Section 6 pp.95-97 of the Conservation Area Appraisal provides more information on new development within the Conservation Area.

