

CONSERVATION AREAS

- their importance, what is controlled and how you can contribute



What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is an area which has a special architectural or historic character and is considered worthy of protection and enhancement. It is designated by the Borough Council in recognition of the area's special character and to protect part of our heritage. It may cover the historic centre of a town or village, an older unaltered residential area, a group of historic rural buildings or an important country house in large landscaped grounds.

The Planning Policy Section at the Council can advise if your property is within a Conservation Area. Telephone 01732-876265. There are also plans of Conservation Areas in the libraries and at the Council offices at Tonbridge Castle and Kings Hill.

Addington	New Barns and Broadwater Farm
Aldon, Otham	North Frith, Hadlow
Aylesford	Offham
Birling	Offham Church
Birling Place	Old Soar and Allens, Plaxtol
Bradbourne, East Malling	Oldbury
Budds Green, Shipbourne	Oxenhoath and Hamptons, West Peckham
Bullen Corner, East Peckham	Paddlesworth, Snodland
Butchers Lane, Mereworth	Pizien Well, Wateringbury
Butts Hill, Wrotham	Platt
Clare Park and Blacklands, East Malling	Plaxtol
Claygate Cross, Plaxtol	Quarry Hill, Tonbridge
Cobdown Farm, Ditton	Roughway, Plaxtol
Coldharbour, Hildenborough	Roydon, East Peckham
Ditton	Ryarsh Village
East Malling village	Shipbourne
Fairlawne	Snodland
Fairseat	Snoll Hatch, East Peckham
Hadlow	Stansted
Haysden	The Street, Mereworth
Hildenborough	Tonbridge
Holborough Mill, Snodland	Trottscliffe
Holtwood, Aylesford	Wateringbury
Ightham	Wateringbury Station
Ightham Mote	West Malling
Ivy Hatch	West Peckham
Larkfield Church	Wrotham
Little Mill, East Peckham	Wrotham Water
Mereworth Castle	Yotes Court, Mereworth
Mill Street, East Malling	

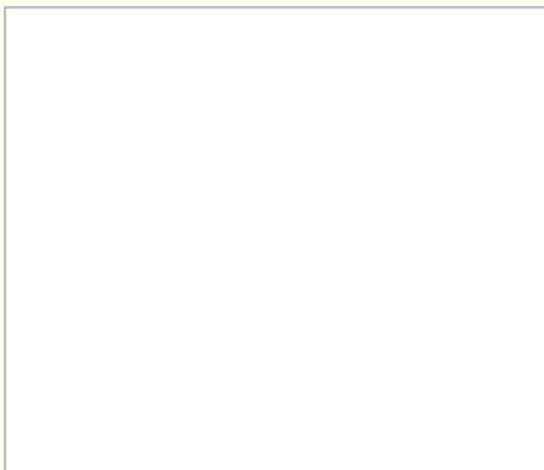
There are 59 Conservation Areas within the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council area, which vary in character and size, from the historic centre of Tonbridge to Ightham Mote. these are all listed above.

ADVICE NOTE

The Importance of Conservation Areas

Whilst Conservation Areas vary in size and character, it is the quality and interest of the area as a whole that is important rather than the individual buildings within it. However, most of the buildings within a Conservation Area will help to shape its character in one way or another and therefore any changes to individual properties can have a significant impact.

The character of a Conservation Area can result from a number of different elements – buildings, walls, footpaths, squares, green spaces, paved areas, trees, landscape, and so on. It can also draw from senses and experiences, such as sounds, activities, micro-climates, or historical associations. Conservation Area designation aims to ensure that this special architectural or historic character remains unharmed or is enhanced. Without recognition of the importance of these areas, their character could easily be spoilt or lost, through incremental changes, demolition or inappropriate development.



Conservation Areas often have a strong sense of place and, although the character of a conservation area may be unique, they are probably most important to people because they represent a familiar and cherished local scene.

Conservation Policy

The Council is required to designate Conservation Areas (under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990), to keep them under review and if appropriate, to designate further Areas. It should also bring forward proposals from time to time for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. In addition, the Council must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when making a decision about future development .

In order to protect the special character of the Conservation Areas, the Borough Council has included policies within the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan. These seek to ensure that a proposal does not harm the character or appearance of the area and set out criteria against which any proposed development should be considered.

A copy of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan can be viewed at the Council Offices or local libraries.

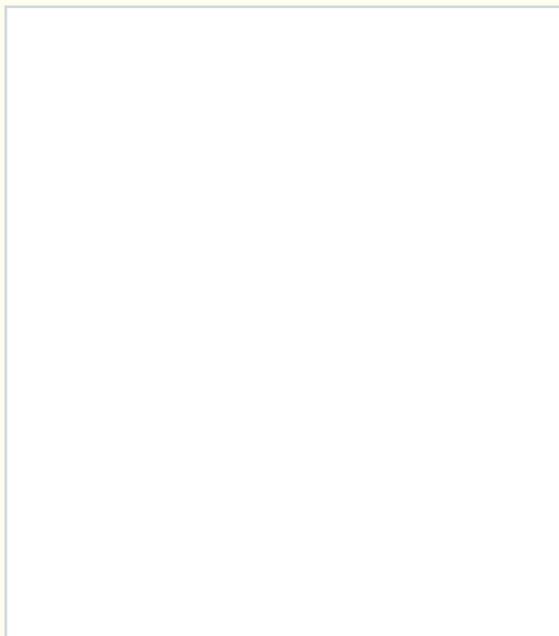
The Council carried out detailed assessments of the Conservation Areas at the time of their designation, and now has a programme of publishing formal *Conservation Area Appraisals*. These will set out clearly the special character of each area. As well as providing a sound basis for the control of development, it is hoped that they will give guidance to property owners with regard to appropriate development and how the character of a Conservation Area can be preserved and enhanced. To be published in a leaflet form, they will be available to everyone for purchase or reference.

The benefits of being in a Conservation Area

Designation of a Conservation Area raises awareness of the area's special attributes and can foster pride in the locality. It usually increases the profile of an area and gives it a certain "kudos". Conservation Areas are often sought after places in which to live and work, as well as spend leisure time. Not only because of the high quality environment but also because people perceive it as being an area of stability.

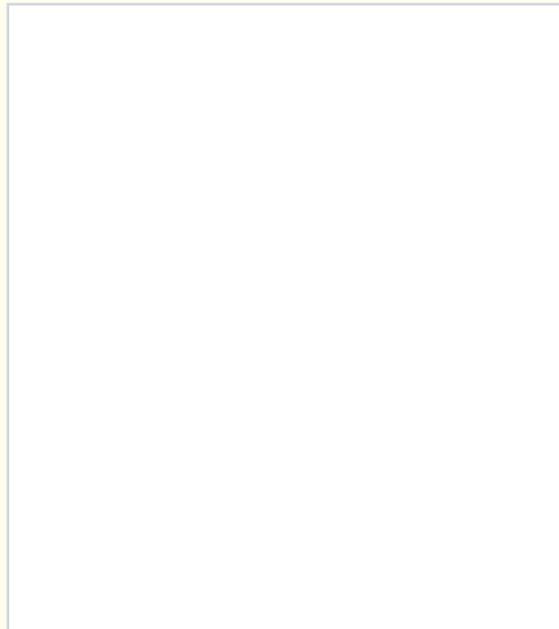
Generally, a high standard of architectural design is expected for all development in a Conservation Area. This will also be required to respect the existing character of the built environment.

Conservation can play a key part in promoting economic prosperity by ensuring that an area offers attractive living and working conditions which will encourage further investment.



The historic environment is, of course, of particular importance for tourism and leisure.

In addition, maintaining the appearance of a Conservation Area and the character of the groups of buildings within it can often sustain or enhance the value of individual properties.



The objective of high quality design applies not only to private development but also the public realm. The Borough Council is committed to achieving a high quality environment in Conservation Areas and will seek to ensure that any work carried out is appropriate and sympathetic to the historic character of the area. Traditional materials and designs are used wherever possible.

In addition to the Historic Buildings Grant Scheme (see later for more detail), the Council does from time to time introduce special grant schemes. For example, grant for the repair or reinstatement of traditional shopfronts, which has previously been offered in Tonbridge and Snodland.

Contact the Planning Policy Section on 01732 - 876218 to find out if there are any grants available in your area

Special Controls in Conservation Areas

It is important to note that the designation of a Conservation Area does not mean that changes cannot occur, but rather that any change should preserve or enhance the features which make up its special character. Controls are imposed which are additional to the normal planning restrictions, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The benefits of this and the maintenance of a high quality environment are perceived by most people who live and work in Conservation Areas as being worth the additional restrictions.

The additional controls within Conservation Areas are outlined here for your information. However **it should be remembered that other planning controls may still apply and are not altered by Conservation Area status.**

It is recommended that before considering any development, you contact the relevant Development Control Area Team (see back page for details) to check whether planning permission or any other consent is required.

Houses and their alteration

■ The size of an extension that may be built without the need to apply for planning permission is more restricted within a Conservation Area. Any proposals should always be discussed with the relevant Area Team at an early stage.

■ Planning permission is likely to be required for the erection of any building or structure within the garden of the house, for example, a workshop, pavilion, greenhouse and so on (where these are larger than 10m³). Advice should be sought from the relevant Area Team.

■ Cladding of the exterior of a residential property with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles will require submission of a planning application.

■ Any enlargement of a house by way of alteration or additions to the roof, e.g. a dormer window, will require a planning application to be made.

■ A planning application is needed for a satellite antenna where it is to be installed on a chimney; or on a building over 15m in height; or on a wall or roof slope which fronts a highway.

Industrial buildings and warehouses

■ There are greater restrictions on how an industrial building or warehouse may be extended within a Conservation Area. Any proposals for development should be checked with the relevant Area Team.

Other commercial premises and flats

■ **Any extension or alteration to other commercial premises or flats, which materially affects the external appearance of the building, will require a planning application to be made.** This is particularly important within Conservation Areas, where even small alterations can materially affect the character and appearance of the area. For instance, such alterations can include: render of brickwork, replacement of slates with concrete tiles, and the replacement of windows. The advice of the relevant Area Team should be sought before carrying out any changes.

Demolition

■ **Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any building within a Conservation Area, except the following:**

- (a) any building with a total cubic content not exceeding 115m³ or any part of such building
- (b) any wall/fence etc less than 1m high fronting onto the street or less than 2m high elsewhere
- (c) any building subject to a formal Order requiring demolition

Planning officers are happy to give advice on whether planning permission is required for work within a Conservation Area. Please contact the relevant area team, see back of leaflet for details.

Trees

■ 6 weeks notice must be given to the Council of intent to cut down, top, lop, uproot or destroy a tree within a Conservation Area. The Council will then advise if it wishes to raise an objection. If a response is not received from the Council within 6 weeks of the notice being given, work may go ahead.

This requirement does not apply to:

- trees which have a diameter less than 75mm (3") when measured at a height of 1.5m (4'11") above the ground.
- *trees already covered by a **Tree Preservation Order**, in which case any works will require consent.*

Unauthorised Works and development

It is unfortunately the case that, sometimes, landowners and others carry out works without first obtaining any necessary consent from the Borough Council. The Council does have certain legal powers to deal with such situations, but can only take action, once it is aware of any alleged unauthorised works, after detailed investigation.

If you suspect someone may be doing something without permission, please let us know. (See the back of the leaflet for contact details). We will investigate the matter and let you know the outcome. We can keep your name and address confidential.

Maintenance and Repairs

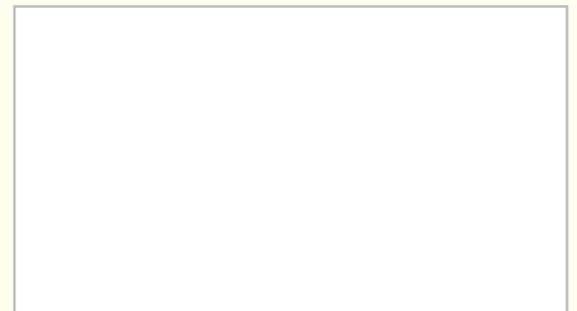
The Local Planning Authority has a duty to pay special attention to the character or appearance of conservation areas, in exercising its planning powers. However, these powers are fairly limited. The principal guardians of the character of the area are the residents and business people who live and work in the Conservation Area and who are responsible for maintaining their individual properties which together contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

The character of Conservation Areas can be altered or lost through the use of inappropriate materials, not only on the buildings themselves but also on the ground, and along boundaries. The introduction of features, such as sheds, porches, pergolas, hard surfacing, and so on, can also result in changes to the Area which eventually result in the loss of its special character.

In most of the Conservation Areas in the Borough, few of the residential buildings are isolated. Even if they are detached they are part of a wider street scene, often of houses of similar style and size. Altering the appearance, form or size of any one house can affect not only that building, but the whole street. Unsympathetic replacement windows, for instance, (particularly where the size of the openings are changed or inappropriate materials used) can alter the appearance of the property considerably. Where a number of different designs are used along a street, the rhythm and unity of its original appearance can be spoilt.

Painting or rendering over original brickwork is another alteration which can dramatically change a property's appearance and irreparably damage the street scene. As well as covering up attractive brickwork, it can obscure original architectural and brick detailing and requires regular redecoration to maintain an attractive appearance. The paint or render can also trap moisture which might actually cause damage to walls.

Many alterations to older properties using modern materials can upset the balance within these properties and can cause more costly problems, such as cracks, damp, or rot. Care should be taken with any alteration to an older building and it should be remembered that unsympathetic changes are likely to devalue a house, if not the whole locality.



Boundary treatment, especially that to the street, is an essential feature of any property. Original boundaries, whether a brick or ragstone wall, railings, fencing or hedges, should be retained wherever possible and every effort made to reinstate missing boundary treatments with a sympathetic replacement. The particular design and the materials used should take account of the character of the property and the surrounding area.

If you are unsure what materials are appropriate in your Conservation Area, please contact the Policy Section on 01732-876218.

Listed Buildings

Some historic buildings are listed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport because of their exceptional interest. If you live in a Listed Building, further guidance on the controls that apply is available from the relevant Area Team. However, the following is a brief summary.

When a building is Listed, this covers the building both internally and externally and also any object or structure fixed to it. In addition, any object or structure within the grounds or garden of the building, which was there before 1948, is also considered as being Listed.

Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition, extension or alteration of the building in any way that affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, internally as well as externally. You must get this consent from the Borough Council before any work is started. You may also require planning permission for the proposed works. The Development Control Area Team will be able to advise you on this.

New gates, fences, walls, railings or other means of enclosure surrounding a Listed Building will require planning permission. Similarly most sheds, garages and greenhouses and other outbuildings will also require planning permission. The design of these should harmonise with the existing building and its setting.

The Council's Conservation Officer is always keen to advise on appropriate repair and restoration of Listed Buildings and can be contacted on 01732-876218

Historic Buildings Grant Scheme

The Borough Council offers grants towards the cost of repairs to buildings of architectural or historic importance (usually Listed Buildings). These grants are intended to contribute towards the additional costs incurred in carrying out specialist repair works to listed buildings.

In special cases, the Borough Council may be able to grant aid specific repair and the replacement of original features where these add to the special character of a conservation area.

More detailed guidance on these grants is available from the Planning Policy Section 01732-876218.

Article 4(2) Directions

■ A Direction may be made, by the Council, under Article 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 withdrawing permitted development rights for specific additions or alterations to houses within a Conservation Area.

■ If such a Direction applies to your property you will have been notified or it would have been revealed in the land charges search when you purchased the property. Details of what work is covered by the direction should have been given to you at the time of notification, however, if you would like to check please contact the relevant Area Team.

Further advice

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) provides a statement of government policies for the protection of historic buildings and Conservation Areas, and explains the role of the planning system. It also gives guidance on alterations to Listed Buildings and several useful addresses and publications.

Leaflets have been prepared for some of the Conservation Areas in the Borough, which set out the reasons for designation and show the extent of the conservation area on a plan. They are available free of charge from the Council, please contact the Planning Policy Section, see below for details.

Guidance is also provided on specific topics, such as the **Shopfront Design leaflet**.

The Council is currently starting a process of **appraisal** of each Conservation Area within the Borough. When each one has been completed, it will be published and available for purchase. These will be publicised in Here and Now or you can contact the Planning Policy Section to find out whether one is available for your area.

More detailed **development briefs** are also sometimes prepared for specific sites within or adjacent to conservation areas, where these are considered necessary.

If you would like more advice on Conservation Areas, historic building repair and restoration, or making a planning application in a Conservation Area please contact one of the following.

For advice on new development, alterations to properties, the need for planning permission and trees please contact the relevant Area Team:

Area Team 1 01732-876253

Hadlow, Hildenborough, Tonbridge

Area Team 2 01732-876303

Addington, Birling, Borough Green, East Peckham, Ightham, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Mereworth, Offham, Plaxtol, Platt, Ryarsh, Shipbourne, Stansted, Trottiscliffe, Wateringbury, West Malling, West Peckham, Wrotham,

Area Team 3 01732-876234

Aylesford, Burham, Ditton, East Malling, Larkfield, Snodland, Wouldham

For advice on grants, whether your property is within a Conservation Area or is Listed, repair to Listed Buildings and use of materials, please telephone 01732-876218

For advice on alleged unauthorised development, please telephone 01732- 876302

All at:

**Planning and Engineering Services
Tonbridge and Malling Borough
Council
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4LZ**

**Or email with your question to:
planning.services@tmbc.gov.uk**