

Conservation Areas

A Planning Guide



INTRODUCTION

Mole Valley is a district rich in history and architecture and many village and town centres have been designated as conservation areas (28 in total). This leaflet is intended to be a brief introductory guide for those living in conservation areas which answers some of the questions most regularly put to the Council.

It is not intended to be an exhaustive document covering every legal and technical aspect, and for more detailed specific advice please contact the Planning Department of Mole Valley District Council at an early stage.

Do I live in a conservation area?

A full set of local conservation area boundary plans are kept by the Council's Planning Department and are available for public inspection. If you are unsure if your property is located within a conservation area you can check by contacting the Conservation Section of the Planning Department on 01306 879192/879247. (email: peter.mills@molevalley.gov.uk).

How and why are conservation areas designated?

A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to

preserve or enhance'. It is the character of an area, rather than individual buildings that is important when designating a conservation area. They are often centred on the historic core of a settlement, and in particular on groups of listed buildings. However, the boundary may also include unlisted historic or modern buildings, open spaces, walls and trees and any other features of local interest where they contribute to the special character as well.



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Conservation areas are important in ensuring that the processes of change are moderated to preserve and enhance the best of the past and allow for sympathetic high quality modern development, where appropriate. This is essential if the character of our towns and villages is to be retained for the benefit of future generations. Local authorities have a statutory duty to designate conservation areas. Consultation with the public, local groups and parish councils would be part of the

designation process. The Council also has a duty to undertake regular reviews and new conservation areas and revisions to existing boundaries will be considered in the future.

Every conservation area has its own special character to be preserved and enhanced. Understanding what is special is an important starting point and the Council has published guidance and character descriptions for each of its 28 conservation areas. These can be provided on request.

What are the benefits of living in a conservation area?

The extra controls that apply to conservation areas are designed to protect the special historic and architectural character of each town, village or hamlet for everyone. They are intended to prevent our most attractive settlements from becoming dull and featureless, full of characterless buildings and insensitive alterations. Every application for development within an area is assessed against the need to preserve or enhance the particular local character.

Where finances allow, and where it is appropriate, the Council will consider co-ordinating the implementation of suitable environmental improvement works, such as repaving in traditional



South Street, Dorking

materials and providing good quality street furniture. Financial assistance may be available for the repair and restoration of significant architectural features within a conservation area from the Surrey Historic Buildings Trust, through its 'Small Grants Scheme'. (see back of leaflet for contact details).

What controls are there in a conservation area?

There are additional planning controls over development within a conservation area, over and above those that apply normally to sites and buildings elsewhere. Policies contained in the Mole Valley Local Plan explain how planning controls will be applied in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.

For detailed advice on matters relating to planning issues within a conservation area, please contact the Council's Planning Department on 01306 879102. However, in general terms, if you live within a conservation area you will need planning permission for:

- an extension if the volume of the original house when first built, or as it stood on 1st July 1948, would be increased by more than 10%, or 50 cubic metres, whichever is the greater
- a new building or structure with a volume of more than 10 cubic metres. Remember if you do erect a detached outbuilding of more than 10 cubic metres in volume, it must be treated as an extension to the house, regardless of where it is situated and this will reduce the allowance for further extensions
- any roof extension, such as a dormer window, if it materially alters the shape of the roof
- cladding the outside of your house with stone, tiles, artificial stone, plastic or timber
- a satellite dish if:
 - there is more than one dish
 - a dish exceeds 90cm in size
- it protrudes above the highest part of the ridge of the roof
- it is larger than 45cm when fixed to a chimney and the dish is higher than the highest part of the stack
- it is fixed to any part of the building which front the road or public footpath.

Am I likely to need any other form of permission from the Council?

The character of conservation areas is often defined by groups of buildings, both listed and unlisted, and the loss of an individual building can disrupt the existing harmony of the local scene. For this reason, conservation area consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any unlisted building exceeding 115 cubic metres (listed building consent is required if the building is statutorily listed and separate guidance on this is available). Conservation area consent may also be required to take down a fence, wall or gate.

Trees are given special protection and anyone wishing to lop, top or fell a tree with a trunk over 75mm in diameter (measured 1.5 metres above the ground) must give the Council six weeks notice of their intentions. The work may then be approved or a tree preservation order served. For further advice regarding the protection of trees please contact the Council's Tree



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Officer on 01306 879286. (email: planning@molevalley.gov.uk)

How do I obtain conservation area consent?

The procedure for applying for conservation area consent is similar to that for listed building consent and there is no fee. Application forms are available from the Planning Department. Officers will be happy to discuss the matter in advance of an application being submitted.

How else can the character of a conservation area be protected?

Alongside major features such as the materials, style and size of the houses, smaller elements such as the shape and detailing of windows and doors and the colour of joinery can contribute a great deal to the local character. This is particularly so if there was an intentional unity in the original design of the buildings.



Leatherhead



Brockham Green

Changes to features such as doors and windows on private houses are normally permitted without the need to obtain planning permission.

However, in conservation areas where local character is in danger of being eroded through small scale incremental change, an Article 4 (2) Direction can be introduced by the Council to cover residential areas only. The effect of this is to bring small scale alterations, such as replacing or painting doors and windows where the existing colour is essential to the character, within planning control. No fee is charged for a planning application required where an Article 4(2) Direction is in place.

An Article 4(2) Direction can be served on the whole or part of a conservation area, if there are neighbourhoods with a distinct character. Directions have been served to cover several areas of 19th century housing in both Leatherhead and Dorking and a housing estate in Brockham. Further details of these Directions can be obtained from the Planning Department.

Mole Valley
Conservation Areas



Useful Contacts

Ancient Monuments Society

St. Ann's Vestry Hall
2 Church Entry
London EC4V 5HB
Telephone: 020 7236 3934
Website:
www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk

Council for British Archaeology

Bowes Morrell House
111 Walmgate
York YO1 2UA
Telephone: 01904 671417
Website: www.britarch.ac.uk

Department for Culture Media and Sport

2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
Telephone: 020 7211 6200
Website: www.dcms.gov.uk

Dorking and District Museum

The Old Foundry
62 West Street
Dorking RH4 1BS
Telephone: 01306 876591

English Heritage (South East Region)

Eastgate Court
195 - 205 High Street
Guildford GU1 3EH
Telephone: 01483 252000
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Leatherhead Museum

Hampton Cottage
64 Church Street
Leatherhead KT22 8DP
Telephone: 01372 386348
Website:
www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY
Telephone: 020 7377 1644
Website: www.spab.org.uk

Surrey County Council Historic Buildings Officer

Telephone: 01483 518758

Surrey Historic Building Trust (grants)

Telephone: 01483 518758
For application forms visit:
www.surreycc.gov.uk and search site for
'Surrey Historic Buildings Trust'

Surrey History Centre

130 Goldsworth Road
Woking GU21 1ND
Telephone: 01483 594594
Website:
www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistoryservice

The Georgian Group

6 Fitzroy Square
London W1P 6DX
Telephone: 020 7529 8920
Website: www.georgiangroup.org.uk

The Twentieth Century Society

70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
Telephone: 020 7250 3857
Website: www.c20society.org.uk

The Victorian Society

1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London W4 1TT
Telephone: 020 8994 1019
Website: www.victorian-society.org.uk



Mole Valley District Council
Pippbrook
Dorking
RH4 1SJ

Tel: 01306 885001
Fax: 01306 879180
Email: planning@molevalley.gov.uk
www.molevalley.gov.uk

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