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## Conservation Areas in Brighton & Hove: A Resident's Guide

**EN/CR/IN/CA/03**  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

### **What are Conservation Areas?**

These are areas that have been identified as having special architectural or historic interest with character or appearance that is worth preserving or enhancing. In Brighton & Hove there are 34 conservation areas covering groups of buildings as diverse as downland villages, Regency squares and post-war suburban avenues. The special characteristics of these areas will be defined differently and each conservation area will have a character statement that sets this out clearly.

### **How does living in a conservation area affect me?**

Planning controls are tighter in conservation areas, however the level of planning control will actually vary between buildings, depending on whether they are listed buildings, single family dwellings, commercial buildings or flats and also whether there is an 'Article 4 Direction' in place. Listed building and Article 4 Direction controls are explained in detail in separate Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes. You can find out which controls affect you by contacting the council.

Any application for planning permission in a conservation area will be considered in terms of the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area in addition to other normal planning considerations. Specific policies have been drawn up for this purpose and are set out in detail in the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, however general principles for unlisted buildings are as follows:

### **Repair rather than replace**

Like-for-like repairs do not need planning permission and the procedure for making an application can therefore be avoided. It is usually much cheaper to just repair something. Also, keeping as much of the original material as possible (which is usually far better quality than the equivalents today) is more sustainable than discarding it, and is therefore better for the environment.

The council has lists of specialists in the area that can carry out repair works, which may save you money and time.

### **Windows and doors**

Traditional timber windows and doors are fundamental elements of the street scene, and in many of Brighton & Hove's streets they are features that form a distinct pattern which can be harmed by the intrusion of new designs and finishes. In particular uPVC doors and windows cannot be produced with the delicate joinery sections possible in wood.

For these reasons uPVC and aluminium windows and doors will not normally be given planning permission on street frontages. As an alternative, residents are encouraged to draft-proof their

existing windows with effective new weather strips, install secondary glazing, or fit new timber double glazed windows to the same design as the originals. Sometimes it will not be possible to accurately replicate the same design in timber with double glazing, particularly if there are glazing bars, therefore timber double glazing may not always be acceptable. Where the original windows have been removed in the past residents are encouraged to reinstate timber windows to the original pattern.

Buildings retaining their timber sliding sash windows are often particularly sought after by potential purchasers.

## **Roofs**

The replacement of natural slate or clay tile roofs with interlocking concrete tiles can have a dramatic impact on the roof-line by creating a discordant patchwork effect of different colours and textures. The removal of clay ridge tiles, particularly those with decorative profiles is also seen as harmful. Concrete also weighs significantly more than clay or slate and roofs may need strengthening to take the extra load.

Therefore where roofs are visible and the original roof materials are significant elements in the street, permission will not be given for interlocking concrete tiles. Replacing the roof with matching new natural slates or clay tiles (as appropriate) will not need permission.

In some instances enough good slates can be salvaged from a roof to be turned and re-used on one slope, cutting the cost of new materials.

There are some man-made slates that are considered acceptable as a replacement for natural slate on unlisted buildings in conservation areas, and permission will usually be given for one of these products; a list of those acceptable is available from the council. Likewise plain concrete tiles may be acceptable replacements for clay tiles.

## **Dormers**

In conservation areas all dormers need planning permission. Where a traditional dormer pattern exists this should be maintained, and permission will not be given to enlarge or alter an existing original, or to add a dormer that is not to the original pattern.

Where dormers are not a traditional feature of the street, a small number of non-original dormers will not be seen as a precedent for more, and such future applications will normally be refused. However if a majority of buildings in a group or terrace have had dormers added, permission is likely to be given for a modest dormer if it is designed in accordance with detailed guidance given in SPGBHI 'Roof alterations and extensions'.

## **Roof lights**

On front roof slopes permission is only likely to be given for roof lights where they would not affect the appearance of the street. In such circumstances the roof lights should be small, traditionally designed, flush fitting and have slim cast iron or steel frames. Only one would normally be acceptable, and its position should relate to the windows below. On single dwelling houses permission will often not be necessary for roof lights on rear roof slopes, but this should be confirmed by the council first.

## **Exterior painting**

Many streets have a specific colour or range of colours that must be used and you should contact the council to find out if restrictions apply to you. Permission is not needed to repaint a building in

exactly the same colour as existing. Textured paints should be avoided and bare brickwork should never be painted. More detailed advice is given in SPGBH2 'External paint finishes and colours'.

## **Architectural details**

Features such as stucco mouldings, canopies, balconies, tiled steps, and chimney stacks and pots are details that contribute to the interest of a street scene; they may give a terrace its cohesive texture, or alternatively can provide an individual building with its uniqueness. It is therefore important that such details are retained.

## **Aerials, pipes and alarms**

The thoughtless positioning of cables, pipes, flues, meter boxes and aerials can clutter and spoil a façade. It is usually possible to run services internally or in concealed locations in order to avoid this. In many situations planning permission will be needed for a satellite dish; permission is always needed for dishes on street frontages and chimneys and will normally be unacceptable.

## **Trees**

The Council must be given six weeks notice of any proposal to lop or fell a tree in a conservation area (this does not apply to any tree with a diameter of less than 75 mm at 1.5 m from ground level).

## **Front gardens**

Front boundary walls, railings and gates are important aspects of the street scene. They serve to distinguish private space from public space, break down the scale of the space between buildings, give rhythm to the street through the spacing of openings and piers, and contribute traditional materials and decorative detailing to the street scene. Planning permission will not be given for works to alter or remove front walls or railings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

## **Demolition**

The complete or substantial demolition of a building in a conservation area requires a particular type of permission known as Conservation Area Consent. Partial demolition or removal of features will not require conservation area consent but will normally be part of a wider scheme of alterations requiring planning permission.

## **Unauthorised work**

Carrying out work that does not have the necessary permission runs the risk of enforcement action by the Council. This can result in the costly reinstatement of the building to its pre-existing state. Owners are therefore advised to contact the council at an early stage to find out whether their proposals need permission and whether it is likely to be given.

## **Further information**

More detailed advice can be obtained by 'phoning the Heritage Team on (01273) 292271, email: [conservation@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or by visiting Hove Town Hall.

Approved by Environment Committee 12.12.2002

Amended 07.11.2012 in particular relation to works to trees

**Other documents available:**

- Article 4 Directions (details of additional controls applying to specific areas)
- Conservation Area Street Directory
- Craft skills list (contractors and professionals experienced in working on historic buildings, grouped under trades)
- “What Are Listed Buildings”
- “The Care and Repair of Listed Buildings”
- Summary list of listed buildings
- “Window Replacement and Repair”
- “Damp and Timber Treatment”
- “External Renders”
- SPGBH1 “Roof Extensions and Alterations”
- SPGBH2 “External Paint Colours and Render
- SPD09 “Architectural Features”