

Conservation Areas

Policy ENV8: Conservation Areas

1. Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, setting and appearance. Development will be expected to:
 - i) contribute to the Conservation Area's special interest and its relationship within its setting. The special characteristics of the Conservation Area (such as existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, burgage plots, traditional shopfronts and signs, farm groups, medieval townscapes, archaeological features, historic routes etc.) should be preserved;
 - ii) take into account important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area and show that these would be retained and unharmed;
 - iii) respect the local character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Area in terms of the development's: siting; size; scale; height; alignment; materials and finishes (including colour and texture); proportions; design; and form and should have regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal;
 - iv) be sympathetic to the original curtilage of buildings and pattern of development that forms part of the historic interest of the Conservation Area;
 - v) be sympathetic to important spaces such as paddocks, greens, gardens and other gaps or spaces between buildings which make a positive contribution to the pattern of development in the Conservation Area;
 - vi) ensure the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development are compatible with the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and/or
 - vii) ensure no loss of, or harm to any building or feature that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
2. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a Conservation Area, consent will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

3. **Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a Conservation Area, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.**
4. **Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of structures which make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be encouraged to prevent harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

7.36 Conservation Areas are described in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Inevitably, these areas will vary greatly. Pleasant groups of buildings, open spaces, trees, an historic settlement pattern, a village green, or features of archaeological interest, may all contribute to the special character of an area, and it is that character, rather than individual buildings, which Conservation Area legislation seeks to preserve and enhance.

7.37 A feature of many towns are ‘burgage plots’. Surviving patterns of burgage plots have considerable historic and archaeological significance and contribute much to the character of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford. They are among the principal historic assets of these towns and should be conserved.

7.38 When undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals the opportunity will be taken to produce and update lists of locally important non-designated heritage assets and identification of any heritage assets ‘at risk’ in order to encourage better understanding.

Archaeology

Policy ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

1. **Development must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains.**
2. **Applicants will be expected to undertake an assessment of appropriate detail to determine whether the development site is**