



# Designating and Managing a Conservation Area

This page sets out Historic England's advice to local planning authorities who are considering designating a new conservation area or creating management proposals for an existing conservation area.

A good understanding of what makes them special, and active management once they are designated are key to their ongoing success.

Conservation Areas can be created where a local planning authority identifies an area of special architectural or historic interest, which deserves careful management to protect that character.

The first conservation areas were designated in 1967 under the [Civic Amenities Act](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/69) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/69>), and there are now nearly 10,000 in England.

Most local authorities have a conservation area within their boundaries, and they are generally valued by those living and working in them as special places.

There are many different types including:

- The centres of our historic villages, towns and cities
- Fishing and mining villages
- 18th, 19th and 20th-century suburbs

- Model housing estates, including late 20th century housing projects
- Country houses set in their historic parks
- Historic transport links and their environs, such as stretches of canal and railway and airfields
- Industrial heritage sites



There are nearly 10,000 conservation areas across England. © Historic England

## Conservation area designation

An area has to be identified by the local authority as having a definite architectural quality or historic interest to merit designation ([NPPF paragraph 197](#)

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2021](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2021)).

Conservation areas are normally designated by the local planning authority.

However, Historic England can designate conservation areas in London, following consultation with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The Secretary of State can also designate a conservation area anywhere in England in exceptional circumstances – usually where the area is of more than local interest.

## The local authority's role

**Designation:** is the formal process of the council establishing the conservation area and requires the process to be properly followed otherwise the designation could be challenged. But is it only the starting point of the council's role in managing the new heritage asset.

**Appraisal:** Ideally prior to designation the local planning authority should carry out, or have carried out a Conservation Area Appraisal. This might additionally include a photographic survey of all buildings being included at the time of designation.

**Management Plan:** Following on from designation, this is the key tool for fulfilling the council's duties under the [1990 Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act](#)

(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>) to review the conservation area and its boundaries and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area.

**Alerting and involving the community:** All properties within a conservation area are required to have this recorded as a local Land Charge. Residents and businesses in a conservation area need to know they may need permission from the Council before making alterations such as cladding, inserting windows, installing satellite dishes and solar panels, adding conservatories or other extensions, laying paving or building walls.

It is important to publicise to property owners the following points:

**Article 4 Directions:** The Council can add to the types of alterations that need planning permission by making an Article 4 Directions, and this can be used to protect features particular to the area from being lost without the need of permission.

**Trees:** Cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work requires notifying the Council

**(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas>)** six weeks in advance. This is to give the Council time to assess the contribution the tree makes to the character of the conservation area and if the works would damage this.

**Demolition** or substantial demolition of a building within a conservation area will usually require planning permission from the Council. It is now a criminal offence to carry out demolition in a conservation area without planning permission.

## Further advice

Historic England has produced more detailed advice on the appraisal, designation, and management of conservation areas.

### Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management

Published 8 February 2019

This revised advice note supports the management of change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas.

**(<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>)**

## Research on 20th-century conservation areas

Twentieth-century heritage is often under-valued and vulnerable. Historic England commissioned research from the Twentieth Century Society which explored existing and potential conservation area designation for 20th-century structures and landscapes. The main project report is available here:



Download [Potential Conservation Areas Scoping Report](#)

**(<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/c20-society-conservation-areas-project-report-pdf/>)**

(PDF, 309.28 KB)



Download [Appendix 5.1 Existing C20 Conservation Areas: notes](#)

**(<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/c20-conservation-areas-appdx5-1-pdf/>)**

(PDF, 78.24 KB)



Download [C20 Conservation Areas Report: Appendix 5-2 Existing C20 Conservation Areas](#)

**(<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/c20-conservation-areas-appdx5-2-xlsx/>)**

(XLSX, 100.34 KB)

## Research on the value of conservation areas

Research by the London School of Economics has found that people value living in conservation areas. This is evidenced by properties in conservation areas having higher prices and greater price appreciation, even after adjusting for location and other factors that affect prices.

For more information on this research see: [Value of Conservation Areas](#)

**(<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/research/assessment-ca-value-pdf/>)**