A Homeowner's Guide to Preserving and Enhancing the Character of Your Conservation Area

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Bradford District Council
www.bradford.gov.uk

The Purpose of this Guide

To help people understand how to repair, maintain and restore features and details on old houses.

People who live in conservation areas benefit the most if these areas are kept attractive and well maintained. Conservation areas are assets which must be carefully looked after if they are to be of value to future generations. The regular and appropriate maintenance and repair of historic buildings can keep problems at bay or minimise their impact, saving the inconvenience and cost of undertaking more substantial repairs later on.

As the repair, maintenance and restoration of details to dwellings is outside of the control of the planning system, it remains the right of the owner of a house to undertake repairs and certain types of alteration as they please. Therefore this guidance is not compulsory and is simply advice.

Flats, shops offices and other commercial buildings require planning permission for any works which affect their external appearance, and therefore the elements of this guidance which concern maintenance are applicable to buildings which contain flats or are in commercial use.

How to use this Guide

This Guide is designed to be downloaded from the Council's website either as a complete document or in sections. Select an item from the contents page. The guide will explain:

l   **The conservation value of this feature.**
l   **Best practice in maintaining and repairing this feature.**
l   **How to sympathetically restore this feature if it is absent.**

The guide also looks into best practice with regard to the installation of satellite dishes, alarm boxes, external pipework, flues and damp proofing as well as best practice for the spaces about houses and boundary walls.

The Background to this Guide

During the District-wide Conservation Area Assessment Programme local communities requested information on how to best maintain the character of their historic properties.

Over the course of 2001 to 2006, the Conservation Team fulfilled the Council's statutory duty to review the district's conservation areas, and to publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. This process resulted in the production of Conservation Area Assessment documents covering all 59 conservation areas in the district. These documents can be viewed at the Council's website at:

www.bradford.gov.uk/conservationassessments

and at the planning office and library local to each conservation area.

While the planning and legal controls that apply to conservation areas go some way to protecting their special character and interest, the review of conservation areas carried out by the Conservation Team found that in all conservation areas inappropriate repairs or alterations to dwellings which are outside of the control of the planning system are harming or compromising the special interest of these areas and their value as heritage assets.

In order to address this issue the Conservation Team proposed to provide homeowners with guidance concerning the repair and maintenance of historic buildings in virtually all of the conservation areas. Consultation with the communities in each conservation area found there was strong support for this proposal. In many areas the production of guidance for the repair and maintenance of historic buildings was seen as the number one priority.

Contents