

Local Development Framework Development Affecting Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Document

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1. This South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Development Affecting Conservation Areas forms part of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2. The SPD expands on district-wide policies in the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in July 2007, and policies in individual Area Action Plans for major developments that may vary from the districtwide policies. It provides additional details on how they will be implemented. Policies seek to ensure that Conservation Areas are adequately addressed throughout the development process.
- 1.3. The policy builds on Planning Policy Guidance for Conservation Areas as set out in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994).
- 1.4. Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. South Cambridgeshire is a district comprising over 100 villages and contains over 80 conservation areas; as a result the majority of historic village cores are also designated as Conservation Areas.

PURPOSE

- 1.5. The aim of this Supplementary Planning Document is to provide additional advice and guidance on developments affecting these Conservation Areas and to expand on the broad policy set out in the Development Control Policies DPD Policy CH/5 and PPG 15.
- 1.6. Specific objectives of this document are to:
 - Assist applicants' understanding of whether conservation area consent is required to undertake proposed works;
 - Assist applicants' understanding of the local historic context, help identify features of importance to the character of Conservation Areas, and ensure that proposed developments are appropriately designed to protect and, where possible, enhance their character;
 - Assist applicants gain conservation area consent and / or planning permission quickly by informing them what information is required to accompany planning applications to justify their proposals and demonstrate what impact they would have on the character of the Conservation Area;
 - Ensure that development is undertaken in an appropriate manner to avoid adverse harm to the character of the Conservation Area.



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LDF POLICY

1.7. Development proposals in or affecting Conservation Areas will be controlled by the following policy in the Development Control Policies DPD:

POLICY CH/5 Conservation Areas

Planning applications for development proposals (including applications for Conservation Area Consent for demolitions) in or affecting Conservation Areas will be determined in accordance with legislative provisions and national policy (currently PPG 15), together with the local policies set out in Supplementary Planning Documents and guidance contained in specific Conservation Area Appraisals (where they exist) and the District Design Guide.

1.8. When considering Planning Applications for Developments in Conservation Areas PPG 15 offers the following guidance:

Paragraph 4.14 of PPG 15 states: 'Section 72 of the Act requires that special attention shall be paid in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This requirement extends to all powers under the Planning Acts, not only those which relate directly to historic buildings. The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area should also, in the Secretary of State's view, be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area.'

Paragraph 4.19 reinforces this and states: 'The Courts have recently confirmed that planning decisions in respect of development proposed to be carried out in a conservation area must give a high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. If any proposed development would conflict with that objective, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission, though in exceptional cases the presumption may be overridden in favour of development which is desirable on the ground of some other public interest.'

Finally, in this respect, paragraph 4.20 states: 'As to the precise interpretation of 'preserve or enhance', the Courts have held (South Lakeland DC v Secretary of State for the Environment, [1992] 2 WLR 204) that there is no requirement in the legislation that conservation areas should be protected from all development which does not enhance or positively preserve. Whilst the character and appearance of conservation areas should always be given full weight in planning decisions, the objective of preservation can be achieved either by development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance, or by development which leaves character and appearance unharmed.'

- 1.9 Development affecting Conservation Areas include:
 - The construction of new buildings;
 - The extension of existing buildings;
 - The demolition of an existing building;
 - The siting of an advertisement;
 - Solar panels and wind turbines in Conservation Areas;



• The siting of satellite dishes in Conservation Areas; Note: The issue of trees in Conservation Areas is the subject of a separate SPD.

- 1.10 In considering applications for such developments the District Council will seek to ensure that the development will not harm the architectural or historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Many historic buildings within Conservation Areas are also listed, and developments affecting these listed buildings or their setting will also need to comply with the policies set out in the separate SPD on works to Listed Buildings.
- 1.11 The District Council has embarked on a programme to prepare individual character appraisals and management plans for all Conservation Areas in South Cambridgeshire, but given the numbers involved this process will take some time to complete. Where an appraisal exists it will identify the key characteristics of the area, as well as important gap sites, views and vistas, key buildings, walls and trees and other built or natural features. Any planning application within, or adjacent to, a Conservation Area will be considered against the key characteristics identified within the appraisal and the policies outlined in the management plan.
- 1.12 As stated in Policy CH/5, the District Council has adopted as council policy a district wide *Design Guide* which also contains relevant guidance on design issues. This is due to be reviewed and updated prior to adoption as SPD in its own right.





CHAPTER 2 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

INFILL SITES

2.1 Many villages include gap sites that are physically large enough to accommodate infill development. In considering any proposal for such site the District Council will consider the value of that site as open ground in the Conservation Area and the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area. Gap sites frequently afford views through the area, sometimes to a key building (such as the church) or to open countryside beyond the village framework.



An important view towards a church that should be retained and protected from infill development.

- 2.2 It may also be desirable to retain a gap site in order to preserve the pattern and rhythm of development in the village. Thus, on the edge of a village the pattern of development may be for the buildings to be sited further apart, set in larger plots, and where the inclusion of a new infill dwelling would disturb this established pattern.
- 2.3 Where a character appraisal has been prepared, this will assist in the identification of key vistas and views and also assist in defining the pattern and rhythm of development within the Conservation Area.
- 2.4 However, and as noted in PPG15, 'many Conservation Areas include gape sites, or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from, the character or appearance of the area; their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area'. Where a character appraisal exists, this should identify such sites and buildings.
- 2.5 The District Council will refuse applications for infill development on sites that make an important contribution to a Conservation Area, either by affording key views or ensuring the pattern and rhythm of development is retained. The District Council will encourage appropriate development/redevelopment on sites that are identified in Conservation Area character appraisals as detracting from the character or appearance of that Conservation Area.



- 2.6 Some gap sites are located adjacent to a Listed Building and development of that site may impact on the setting of the Listed Building. In considering an application to develop such a site the District Council will take into consideration the impact that that development will have of the setting and wellbeing of the adjacent Listed Building.
- 2.7 The District Council will refuse applications for infill development where that development would harm the setting or wellbeing of an adjacent Listed Building.

BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.8 Frequently older properties can be located within substantial plots and these are often viewed as having development potential. Depending on the location of the existing dwelling, such development may need to be in the form of *Backland* development, whereby the new dwelling is built to the rear of the existing dwelling. A number of issues may arise from this type of proposal (including the need to upgrade the access to a shared access, overlooking/privacy between the host dwelling and the new dwelling and/or their private external spaces etc). In addition to these Development Control issues, where backland development is proposed within a Conservation Area the impact of the proposal on the pattern of development in the vicinity will also need to be carefully considered.
- 2.9 The South Cambridgeshire Design Guide identifies that a number of villages have a strong linear from and in such villages backland development may weaken or erode this character. The District Council will refuse Planning Permission for backland development where that development would erode the character and/or undermine the pattern of development in a Conservation Area.

LOCATION ON PLOT

2.10 Careful consideration must be given to where a building is located on a plot, and this should reflect the traditional precedents set elsewhere within a particular Conservation Area. Frequently this will require new structures to be built tight to the back of a pavement or aligned down a side boundary, in contrast to the presumption of many developers to site the buildings in the middle of their site.



New infill development in Bassingbourn Conservation Area set close to the back of the pavement to align with adjacent structures on the High Street.

Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD



SCALE, MASSING, FORM AND DETAILING

- 2.11 It is important for the overall scale of any new development to be proportionate to the size of village in which it is to be located and for the scale of individual buildings within a development to reflect the predominant scale of buildings found adjacent, and/or across a particular Conservation Area. The District Council will refuse planning permission for developments that fail to reflect the scale of buildings within a Conservation Area or dominate or otherwise cause harm.
- 2.12 It is also important for new structures to have an appropriate mass and form. Many traditional cottages located in the conservation areas of South Cambridgeshire are wide frontage and have a narrow plan depth. Modern housing frequently adopts a deeper plan form; with semi-detached or terraced housing is often having narrow frontages onto the street. Such house types may be inappropriate for use in Conservation Areas and the expectation is that individual house types will be developed that will result in a built form that relates positively to the predominant, traditional built form in vicinity of the site or the wider Conservation Area.
- 2.13 Where a design seeks to replicate traditional built forms of the area it is important that this is extended down into the construction details. All too frequently standard modern details can weaken the architectural impact of a new development. For instance, the location of window frames in walls needs to be carefully considered; in brickwork it is traditional for the window to be set back from the front face of the wall, whereas in a timber frame structure the frame is generally set flush with the front face. Other details, such as eaves, verges, chimneys, dormers et cetera are equally important.



Traditional timber sash window to a new house set 100mm back from face of the brickwork and with a sub-cill. Note also the use of Flemish bond in the brickwork together with the shaped 'voussoir' bricks over the opening.

2.14 Detailing includes the brick bond selected for a development and again most traditional structures were constructed with solid walls in Flemish bond, whereas most modern structures employ cavity walls and stretcher bond brickwork. Where appropriate, the District Council will require traditional Flemish, English or English Garden Wall bond to be employed for developments in Conservation Areas (these may be constructed using snapped headers in cavity walls).



2.15 Detailing is equally important on contemporary design solutions and again it should be emphasised that many details found on standard, estate type housing will not be considered appropriate in Conservation Areas.



Appropriately detailed contemporary housing sited within the Melbourn Conservation Area

2.16 In order to ensure appropriate detailing is incorporated into new developments, the District Council may require (by way of conditions) the submission and approval in writing of large scale details (generally at a scale of not less than 1:20) for specific parts of a development.

MATERIALS, INCLUDING THE USE OF SALVAGED MATERIALS

- 2.17 In order for new developments to sit comfortably within the setting of a Conservation Area it is important that they are constructed of appropriate materials, ie materials drawn from the pallet of traditional materials found in the locality. The use of bricks of an inappropriate colour and/or texture, concrete rooftiles, artificial slates and uPVC windows and doors all detract from Conservation Areas. The selection of materials also includes both hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments. The material selection for these elements of a design will again be expected to draw on the traditions of the area, including good quality bricks, clay plain tiles and pan-tiles, blue/black natural slate and timber windows (generally painted). Where clay tiles are used (be they plain tiles or pan-tiles), they should be of a form and size that matches the traditional clay tiles used in the District. Modern interlocking clay 'plain-type' tiles and the larger, continental type of pan-tile are generally not considered suitable for use in Conservation Areas. Boundaries will generally be formed in brick walls or native species hedge rather than close boarded fencing. The District Council will refuse planning permission for schemes that do not specify appropriate, traditional, local materials, though where exceptional, high quality contemporary designs propose appropriate but nontraditional materials these will be considered on an individual basis. The District Council will expect to agree and approve a high standard of design, planting and materials for the hard and soft landscaping of the open public, or private, spaces connected with developments in Conservation Areas.
- 2.18 It should also be noted that there is a discernable hierarchy in the use of roofing materials on traditional buildings in South Cambridgeshire. The pallet of roofing materials found in the District include longstraw thatch, reed thatch (originally restricted to a geographic area comprising the fen-edge) plain tiles, pan-tiles and



Welsh slate (though slate did not find its way into the area in any quantity until after the introduction of the railways in the middle of the 19th Century). While thatch might be found on any structure from a church down to a humble out-building, plain tiles are generally only found on houses and other more significant buildings. In this district they are only rarely used on barns and other farm buildings (though most dovecotes area either thatched or roofed in plain tiles). Barns, stables and poorer quality cottages would traditionally be roofed in pan-tiles or thatch and in the 19th Century, in the re-building that following a number of major fires in villages, the vulnerable thatch was replaced by slate on all types of structures. New developments in Conservation Areas should respect this hierarchy and will resist the use of plain tiles on barn conversions or in schemes that seek to replicate traditional groups of farm buildings.

- 2.19 Over recent years there has been an increasing move to use recycled building materials, and in particular bricks, slates and roofing tiles. The use of salvaged building materials in the Historic Environment needs to be undertaken with a deal of care and it is often more desirable to be architecturally 'honest' and use new rather than recycled materials. The philosophical reasoning behind this is in that the ability to be able to 'read' and understand the pattern of development of a village is important to our understanding of the growth of that particular community. Therefore a contemporary building undertaken with new, but sympathetic, materials can readily be appreciated as such, whereas a traditional styled building undertaken with salvaged materials might attempt to trick the observer into believing it is older, or even part of the original fabric of the Conservation Area. This issue is particularly important when the new building is within the curtilage of, or adjacent to, a Listed Building. However, in order to address the wider sustainability agenda there is a need to promote the reuse of salvaged building materials, and there will be some sites where a more relaxed attitude towards the use of salvaged materials in Conservation Areas can be accommodated, so long as the texture and colour of materials is appropriate.
- 2.20 The District Council will require appropriate **new** materials to be used for all significant new developments affecting the setting of Listed Buildings, but acknowledges that it may be acceptable to use appropriate, locally salvaged materials for other non-listed extensions or new-build structures in Conservation Areas.

OUTLINE APPLICATIONS

2.21 In order to determine whether or not a proposal will 'preserve or enhance' a Conservation Area it is necessary to be able to fully understand the implication of a proposal and to see that proposals in its context. Outline applications that otherwise contain sufficient information as required by the regulations may not contain sufficient information to enable their impact to be properly determined. Outline applications may therefore not be appropriate in Conservation Areas and when submitted are likely to result in requests for additional information such as key elevations, location of structures, details of access et cetera. The District Council will refuse Outline Applications for developments within Conservation Areas, or affecting their setting, where the information submitted is not sufficient to determine whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance that Conservation Area.

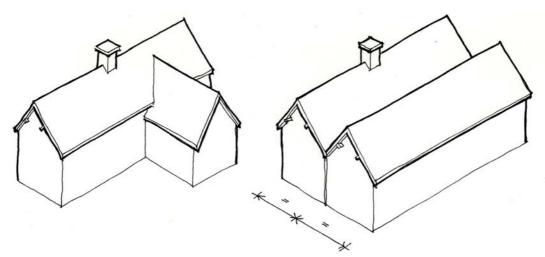




CHAPTER 3 EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS

SITING

3.1 The siting of an extension within a Conservation Area can be equally as important as the siting of a new structure, and often for the same reasons. A poorly sited extension may block a view within the Conservation Area (say to the church tower) or result in a structure that dominates a street scene. Due consideration should be taken into account of the siting of the original building and how it relates to the public realm, particularly when extending traditional structures and those identified as being of architectural or historic interest. Consideration should also be given to historical precedents that exist for extending traditional buildings. A wide frontage narrow plan form building might be extended by adding a wing at right angles to the rear, or adding a parallel range to create a 'double-pile' building, while smaller extensions could take the form of a simple, single storey lean-to on a gable end.



Extension in the form of a wing at right angles to the rear (left) and by adding a parallel range to create a 'double-pile' building (right).

3.2 It is important that planning applications for extensions are accompanied by sufficient information to show the extension in its context, such that a true assessment of its impact can be made.

SCALE FORM AND MASSING

3.3 There is a general assumption that any extension should be subservient to the original structure, and for it to be proportionate. When extending traditional structures that make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area it is particularly important that the scale, form and massing of the extension all acknowledge the original structure, along with the original roof form. A wide frontage, narrow depth cottage with a simple gabled roof should not be swamped by a new extension on the rear with a wide, hipped roof. Just because something is structurally possible does not make it architecturally acceptable. Many conservation areas include traditional, symmetrical, double fronted cottages and houses. When extending such properties, and especially when the extension is to be sited on the side rather than the rear, great care should be taken so that the original symmetrical from is



not disturbed. In these instances it may be appropriate to set the extension back from the front face of the building and to adopt a lower ridge and eaves line.



Extension to a semidetached dwelling in the Histon Conservation Area that respects the form, scale and massing of the original. Note also the appropriate material selection and the well detailed sash windows.

MATERIALS

3.4 Materials used in extending a property should generally reflect those used to construct the original structure, though there are circumstances when it is more appropriate to used contrasting materials to enable the extension to be clearly 'read' as an addition. The choice of materials should generally accord with the principles set out in chapter 2.







Тор

Extension constructed in contrasting, but complementary materials so that the symmetry of the existing cottage is not compromised. Bottom Extension constructed in matching materials but with a clear visual break to separate the old from the new. Both examples from Little Abington Conservation Area





CHAPTER 4 DEMOLITIONS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

- 4.1 Conservation Area Consent is required to demolish any building with a volume over 115 cubic metres (aside from post 1948 agricultural buildings and last used for agriculture). In respect of demolitions within Conservation Areas PPG 15 states: 'account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole. The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Secretary of State expects that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.'
- 4.2 South Cambridgeshire District Council will determine all applications for Conservation Area Consent in accordance with the guidance set out in PPG15 and will require a structural engineer's report for applications for the demolition of any pre 1945 structure. A structural engineer's report may also be required when Conservation Area Consent is sought for a post 1945 structure if that structure is deemed to be of architectural interest.
- 4.3 When Conservation Area Consent is granted for the demolition of a structure, conditions may be added requiring the recording of the building prior to demolition and also to provide that demolition shall not take place until a contract for the carrying out of works of redevelopment has been made and planning permission for those works has been granted. The latter is intended to avoid ugly gaps from appearing in conservation areas as a result of demolition far in advance of redevelopment.



Bishop's Cycles in Histon Conservation Area, where consent has been granted for its demolition but the demolition cannot commence until consent has been granted for the redevelopment of the site

4.4 Where advanced dilapidation and poor structural condition result in the granting of consent for demolition of a building of architectural or historic interest, conditions may be included requiring the salvage of materials and/or components, and for those materials and/or components to be incorporated into the redevelopment on the site.





CHAPTER 5 ADVERTISEMENTS AND SIGNAGE

5.1 It should be noted that advertisements are specifically controlled by Policy CH/8 in the Development Control Policies DPD. This states:

POLICY CH/8 Advertisements

- 1. Advertisements will be restricted to the number, size, format, materials and design appropriate to the building or locality to which it is proposed they be attached in order not to detract from the character and appearance of the district.
- 2. Advertisements alongside roads will not be permitted where they would prejudice road safety.
- 3. In Conservation Areas and on, or affecting, Listed Buildings, advertisements will be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and to avoid harm to the fabric, character or setting of Listed Buildings.
- 5.2 PPG 15 Notes: 'All outdoor advertisements affect the appearance of the building or the neighbourhood where they are displayed. The main purpose of the advertisement control system is to help everyone involved in the display of outdoor advertising to contribute positively to the appearance of an attractive and cared-for environment'
- 5.3 When considering applications for the display of advertisements or signage in Conservation Areas consideration will be given to the size, design (including projection), materials, illumination (internal and external) and the application of lettering and/or logos.
- 5.4 The presumption is that on traditional buildings within Conservation Areas signage will be applied in a tradition manner, i.e. using traditional sign writing techniques on timber boards, or direct onto masonry or render. Permission will be refused for modern, perspex signage and/or applied lettering where such materials will be out of keeping with the context of a Conservation Area. Permission will also not be granted for internally illuminated signs within Conservation Areas. Where signs are to be illuminated this is to be achieved with modest and appropriately styled lamps directed onto the sign. Strict controls will be applied over the extent of any illuminated signs in Conservation Areas, to avoid harming their character and/or appearance, and also to avoid unnecessary light pollution.



New painted sign on masonry wall in the Fen Ditton Conservation Area. Note also that it was not thought necessary to have to provide lighting to this sign

5.5 Blinds or window/door canopies bearing lettering or symbols are generally not appropriate in Conservation Areas and permission will be refused for the installation of such blinds and canopies where it will result in harm to the character and/or appearance of the Conservation Area.



CHAPTER 6 SOLAR COLLECTION PANELS AND WIND TURBINES

- 6.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to the use of renewable energy technology where it is compatible with other policies of the Council. In Conservation Areas this is likely to involve the installation of micro-generation equipment, either in the form of solar collection panels (both photovoltaic and solar heated hot water) or small scale wind turbines.
- 6.2 In conservation areas the installation of solar panels on principle elevations, or on secondary elevations or outbuildings and visible from the street, require planning permission. In addition, the installation of any solar panel that extends more than 200mm above the face of the roof will also require planning permission, irrespective of its location. The installation of any wind turbine in a Conservation Area requires planning permission.
- 6.3 Applications for the installation of such equipment will need to be assessed on an individual basis, which will include an assessment of the visual harm that will result. Where solar panels can be sited away from the principal elevations of a building, or on outbuildings, there will be a presumption in favour of their installation. Solar panels in prominent locations, especially on buildings regarded as making a positive contribution to a Conservation Area, are more likely to result in harm. The District Council will refuse Planning Applications for the installation of solar panels that result in harm to the character and/or appearance of a Conservation Area.



Discretely located solar panel on a side elevation of a 20th century house in the Fulbourn Conservation Area

6.4 Wind turbines are more likely to be visually intrusive in a Conservation Area and may also result in noise and disturbance to others. Planning permission will only be granted for their installation where it is clearly demonstrated that no harm will result.





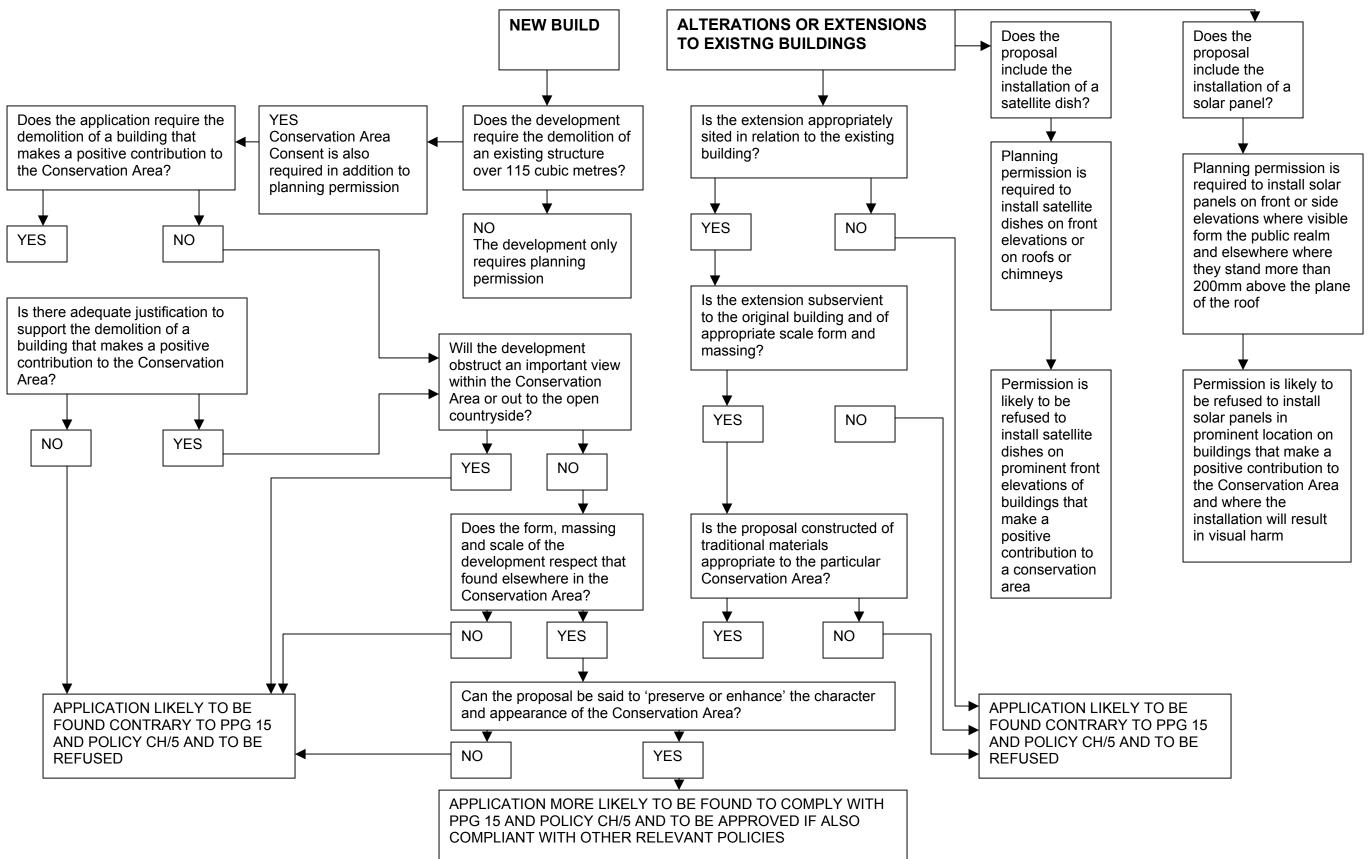
CHAPTER 7 SATELLITE DISHES

- 7.1 The permitted development rights for siting satellite dishes on non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas allow for the installation of a dish that has dimensions no greater than 100cm in any direction and with a cubic capacity of no more than 35 litres to be installed on the side or rear elevation of a private dwelling under 15metres high, provided it is below the eaves and not fixed to the roof or a chimney. There are no permitted development rights to site satellite dishes on buildings in multiple occupancy (such as flats) or on commercial premises.
- 7.2 The District Council will refuse applications for the siting of satellite dishes in prominent locations, and in particular on the front elevations of buildings of architectural or historic interest located within Conservation Areas. Where, for technical reasons, it is not possible to site a satellite dish on a side or rear elevation, consideration should be given to locating the satellite dish on either an outbuilding or a short pole in the rear garden.



Satellite dish located on an outbuilding to avoid compromising the historic structure





Appendix 1 Process Diagram





APPENDIX 2

FURTHER INFORMATION

LOCAL INFORMATION

OTHER RELVANT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS BY SCDC: Trees and Development Sites SPD (Consultation Draft) Works to Listed Buildings or Affecting The Setting Of SPD (Consultation Draft) Biodiversity SPD (Consultation Draft)

NATIONAL INFORMATION

Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994). Planning Policy Guidance note 16: Archaeology and Planning (November 1990)

English Heritage Publications

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas Streets for All - East of England Building in Context – New Development in Historic Areas Retail Development in Historic Areas The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice Small Scale Solar Electric (photovoltaics) Energy and Traditional Buildings Small-Scale Solar Thermal Energy and Traditional Buildings Seeing The History in the View – A method of assessing heritage significance within views (Draft for Consultation)

USEFUL ADDRESSES

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