

Bolton Metro
Environment Department
Planning Control Policy Note No 19
Conservation Areas

In December 1995, Bolton Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Now that it is adopted by the Council, the Unitary Development Plan is the sole statutory land use plan for the whole Borough. The UDP provides the framework for development, planning control and conservation within Bolton. It gives a statement of the Council's policies and proposals for development and other uses of land.

The Council has reviewed its detailed policy advice to correspond with the UDP. This is contained in a series of Planning Control Policy Notes, of which this is one. The Notes are referred to in the UDP and provide clear and concise guidance on a number of key topic areas. The Notes will have been subject to extensive public consultation before being finalised. They are written to help all those who wish to understand the Council's detailed planning requirements and advice.

The interpretation of this advice may sometimes change as a result of different circumstances and particulars. Each planning application submitted to the Council will be treated on its own merits within the context of the general policy guidelines set out in this note.

Prospective applicants requiring clarification of the Note's contents should contact the Council's Planning Control Section.

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Introduction

1. This Planning Control Policy Note gives advice on:

- (a) Bolton policies for conservation areas
- (b) Extra planning control powers over demolition, alteration to houses, advertisements and trees
- (c) Design of new development and alterations
- (d) Submitting a planning application
- (e) Publicity and consultation.

The advice reflects the legislative requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 on the Historic Environment published by the Department of the Environment.

- 2. Many buildings in conservation areas are listed buildings. Advice on controls over listed buildings is given in Planning Control Policy Note 20.

Bolton’s Conservation Areas

- 3. In consultation with Bolton and District Civic Trust the Council have produced Conservation Area Studies for individual Conservation Areas. These studies define the special characteristics of each area and are to be used by the Council as a basis for considering both development proposals and possible enhancement schemes for the area. Further information is available from the Planning Control Section.

- 4. Conservation Areas in Bolton:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Firwood Fold | 14. Riding Gate |
| 2. Deane Village | 15. Wallsuches |
| 3. Barrow Bridge | 18. Bradshaw Chapel |
| 4. Silverwell Street/Wood Street | 19. Egerton |
| 5. Mawdsley Street/Nelson Square | 20. Westhoughton Town Centre |
| 6. Eagley Bank | 21. Dunscar Fold |
| 7. Hilltop | 23. Churchgate |
| 8. St. Paul’s Halliwell | 24. Horwich Town Centre |
| 9. Bank Top | 25. Ringley Fold |
| 11. Birley Street | 26. Town Hall |
| 12. Chorley New Road | 27. Deansgate |
| 13. Greenside (Farnworth) | 29. St. George’s Road |

(see location map)

- 5. Bolton has twenty four conservation areas with a range of different characters reflecting the Borough’s history. Several are within the Borough’s towns. Many are small agricultural or village settlements dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An important

part of Bolton's heritage reflects the part played by the Industrial Revolution and Bolton has a number of mill villages dating from the nineteenth century.

Designation of conservation areas

6. The Council has a duty to designate areas of special architectural and historic importance as conservation areas, and to preserve or enhance the character of these conservation areas. The planning system is a vital instrument in protecting and enhancing the built heritage. As a local planning authority, the Council has control over many physical changes. Additional planning owners are in force within conservation areas:
 - (a) there is control over the demolition of most buildings
 - (b) works to trees in conservation areas cannot normally take place without giving prior notice to the Council
 - (c) permitted development rights that is those works that can be carried out without requiring a specific planning application, are more restricted within conservation areas. The Council is also able to restrict these development rights further by the use of Article 4 directions
 - (d) there is a stricter advertisement control regime in conservation areas.
7. The Council also has a role as the owner of many buildings within conservation areas, and as highway authority it has control over the appearance of roads and footpaths which can be an important feature in the setting of buildings.
8. The preservation and enhancement of conservation areas is an important part of the Council's planning policies but the responsibility is shared by all, including central government, businesses, voluntary bodies, churches and by private individuals as owners, residents and visitors.
9. When works are being contemplated in conservation areas it is always advisable to seek expert advice. It is important to discuss the proposals with planners in the Planning Control Section as early as possible and certainly before a formal application is submitted. This will clarify what the Council's expectations are and may well avoid costs in drawing up proposals which are clearly contrary to the Council's policy and advice.

Policy

10. Bolton's Unitary Development Plan sets out policies for control of development in the Borough. Policies for conservation are given below. Policy CE2 states:

The Council will preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas.

11. The reasoned justification for Policy CE2 states:

Conservation areas represent a significant element of Bolton's architectural and historical heritage. The Council will preserve and enhance these areas through the control of development and through positive schemes of enhancement. Development which is allowed should contribute positively to the quality of the environment. The Council is empowered to designate further conservation areas and will consider designating them as appropriate.

12. Policy CE2/1 states:

The Council will preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas by:

- (a) ensuring that all new development and alterations to existing buildings enhance the appearance of the conservation area;**
- (b) requiring the height, size, design, materials, roofscape and plot-width of new development, including alterations or extensions, to respect the character of the conservation area;**
- (c) seeking to retain the materials, features, trees and open spaces which contribute to the character of the conservation area.**

13. The reasoned justification for Policy CE2/1 states:

This policy outlines some of the elements which the Council will take into account when considering applications in conservation areas.

14. Policy CE2/2 states:

The Council will not normally allow the demolition of buildings which contribute to the character of a conservation area. Where demolition is acceptable the Council will ensure that new development preserves or enhances the appearance of the conservation area, and that building takes place as quickly as possible after demolition.

15. The reasoned justification for Policy CE2/2 states:

Consent from the Council is necessary for the demolition of buildings in conservation areas. If the building is important to the area's character, then demolition will be resisted. The Council will ensure that unsightly gaps are not left when demolition does take place by ensuring rapid redevelopment with good quality buildings.

16. Policy CE2/2 states:

The Council will not normally consider outline planning applications for development in conservation areas.

17. The reasoned justification states:

The Council will consider whether it has sufficient information to assess fully the environmental implications of a proposed development from an outline application.

18. Policy CE9 states:

The Council will not normally allow development that would lead to losses of, and damage to open space within the urban area which is, managed for or has the potential to be used for, recreational or leisure purposes, or fulfils a valuable role in the townscape.

19. The reasoned justification for Policy CE9 states:

Open space is an important feature in the urban area. It provides recreational facilities, adds to the quality of the townscape, provides a habitat for wildlife and generally plays an important part in the quality of life for urban residents. It can also provide a buffer between incompatible uses. It is vital to protect open space from development, particularly when it is visually attractive or has a potential for recreational use. Sensitive planning is necessary to ensure that the character of urban areas is not damaged by loss of open space. The Council will ensure that the visual quality of these open spaces is maintained to as high a standard as possible. The protection of recreational facilities is considered in Policy R2.

Advice

Planning control in conservation areas

20. Extra controls apply in conservation areas to protect or enhance the character of the area.

Control over demolition of unlisted buildings

21. Buildings or parts of buildings in conservation areas cannot be demolished without special permission known as conservation area consent.
22. Consent will not normally be granted for the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas where they make a positive contribution to the area's character or appearance. In these cases applications to demolish will be treated in the same way as applications to demolish listed buildings.

Criteria

23. A building will be judged to make a positive contribution to a conservation area if it meets any of the criteria listed below:
 - (a) The building has qualities of age, style, materials, or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area.
 - (b) It relates by age, materials, or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings and contributes positively to their setting.
 - (c) It individually or as part of a group, serves as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth.
 - (d) It has significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park, or landscape feature.
 - (e) The building has landmark quality.
 - (f) It reflects the traditional functional character of, or former uses within the area.
 - (g) It has significant historic associations with local people or past events.
 - (h) If a public building, its use and internal public space contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Source: English Heritage, Conservation Area Practice (1993)

24. If the building makes little or no contribution to the conservation area then consent may be granted, but only if there are comprehensive and acceptable proposals for the development of the site after demolition.
25. If consent for total demolition is granted, then it would normally be conditional on, or subject to an agreement on, a contract for the redevelopment of the site having been made. This avoids ugly gaps appearing in conservation areas.
26. It is an offence to carry out works without first obtaining the necessary conservation area consent and the Council can prosecute offenders. The same is true of a failure to comply with any condition attached to a consent.

Alterations and extensions to houses and industrial premises

27. Extra controls over development operate in conservation areas. These extra controls cover:
 - (a) House extensions.
 - (b) Cladding of a building with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
 - (c) Additions or alterations to roofs, including insertion of dormer windows.
 - (d) Buildings within the curtilage of the dwelling house
 - (e) satellite dishes.
 - (f) Extensions to industrial and warehouse developments and electricity undertakings.
 - (g) Erection of microwave antennae.
28. It is important that any householder considering altering or extending their house in a conservation area checks at an early stage with the Planning Control Section whether specific planning permission is needed.

Control of the external appearance of houses

29. The Local Authority may make a direction in a conservation area to withdraw permitted development rights for certain types of development on houses, including doors, windows, roofs and frontages. Proposals to introduce such a direction in a conservation area will be publicised and local views taken into account before a direction is made.

Article 4 directions

30. Any further restriction of permitted development right would require the making of an Article 4 direction, which would need approval from the Secretary of State for the Environment. In conservation areas, Article 4 directions would only be made when there is a danger that permitted development is likely to take place which could damage the character of the area.

Advertisements

31. Special consideration will be given to the need to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area, when dealing with advertisement applications. In conservation areas, specific consent is needed for certain types of advertisements, which is not required in other locations.
32. It is important to get advice from the Planning Control Section about the need for planning consent or advertisements. Further guidance on Council policy for advertisement control is given in Planning Control Policy Note on the display of Signs and Advertisements (No. 6).

Trees

33. Trees in conservation areas that are subject to tree preservation orders are already protected. Other trees in conservation areas are also subject to special provisions. Anyone wishing to fell, prune or uproot such trees must give the Council six weeks notice, unless the tree is dying, dead or dangerous, or unless it is less than 7.5 centimetres in diameter, measured 1.5 metres above the ground. Work must not be carried out within that six week period without consent from the Council, otherwise penalties may be incurred. The Local Authority will then consider whether to protect the tree with a Tree Preservation Order.
34. Trees that contribute to the character of a conservation area should normally be retained and the Council will declare Tree Preservation Orders if this is appropriate to protect them. Pruning trees will be allowed if it improves the trees' appearance or health. When the felling of trees is absolutely necessary, then replacement planting will be expected, to a size and species specified by the Council.
35. Further guidance on trees is given in the Council's Planning Control Policy Note on Trees: Protection and Planting in New Developments (No. 7).

New Development in Conservation Areas

36. The Council will give special attention to the design of new development and alterations in conservation areas, and also of development proposals outside the conservation area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.
37. Changes of use will be allowed where they maintain the viability and character of the area. Proposals will be encouraged for the sympathetic redevelopment of sites which, in their present state detract from the character or appearance of the area.
38. Detailed statements on the character of individual conservation areas are being produced. Development proposals will be judged for their effect on the character and appearance of the area, as identified in the character statements.
39. The Council encourages the use of upper floors over shops, particularly for residential use, as this helps maintain the buildings fabric. Permission will not normally be given to applications which would remove separate access to upper floors.

Design of new development

40. New development should respect the context of the site in terms of the following:
 - (a) *Height* - the height of new development should be within the range of height of surrounding traditional properties.
 - (b) *Scale* - the scale of new development should reflect that of the area in the size of windows and doors, floor heights and rhythm of facades.
 - (c) *Building line* - in traditional streets, new buildings should respect the established building line.
 - (d) *Pattern of development* - new development should reflect the existing building pattern as exemplified by surviving street patterns, plot width/ depth, building density and site coverage.
 - (e) *Roof form* - roof form and materials should reflect the tradition of locality. Roof materials should be of similar profile colour and texture as surrounding traditional properties.

- (f) *Materials* - facing materials should reflect the predominant materials in the area. There will be a preference for natural materials.
- (g) *Windows* - windows in new buildings should reflect the window proportion and style of existing buildings in the area. Natural materials are to be preferred. UPVC will not normally be acceptable.
- (h) *New development adjacent to* - or affecting the setting of a conservation area should respect its historic context as given above.

Extensions

- 41. Unsightly or bulky extensions which diminish the character of the existing building and detract from the character of the area will be resisted. Any addition should complement the existing building in scale and materials and in many cases it should be distinguishable from it. It may be appropriate to set it back from the main elevations to create a distinct visual break.
- 42. Applications for extensions should give details of restoration work to the original building as part of an overall improvement scheme. The removal of unsympathetic additions or alterations will be encouraged. Further general guidance concerning planning control of house extensions and space around dwellings is given in Planning Control Policy Notes on space about dwellings and house extensions (Nos 2 and 3).

Alterations

- 43. *Elevations* - traditional materials e.g. stone, terracotta red brick, should not be painted or faced with modern materials. Traditional pointing methods should be used. Strap pointing should not be used on stone buildings as this spoils the appearance of traditional buildings and may damage stonework.
- 44. *Roofs* - the original pitch, form and cladding should be retained. Replacement materials should be of similar size, texture, colour and weathering properties as the original. Dormer windows should follow the traditional pattern where these exist. Roof lights should have flush fittings and should not be introduced on prominent roof slopes.
- 45. *Chimneys* - chimney stacks and pots should be retained or reinstated.
- 46. *Windows* - original windows should be retained and repaired where possible. Replacement windows should match the originals in pattern, mouldings and materials. Natural materials are to be preferred. UPVC

will not normally be acceptable. Replacement window openings should not disturb a balanced elevation, and should respect the size and proportion of existing windows. Important views in and out of the conservation area should be safeguarded. Proposed new development which obscures important views or landmarks due to its height, volume, or proximity will be resisted.

Facadism

47. Demolition of buildings and reconstruction behind retained facades will normally be resisted where this diminishes the character of the area especially where it is proposed to retain a street facade in front of a single large new structure. Facade retention may be acceptable, however, in the case of buildings with an elaborate facade fronting a framed construction, where the new construction will be in scale with the street frontage.

Shop fronts

48. Shop fronts of historic or architectural value should be retained. New shop fronts and fascias should respect local tradition in terms of scale, proportion and materials. They should be sympathetic to the rest of the elevation. Chain store and corporate designs for shop fronts may need modification to suit individual buildings.
49. *Signs* - should be integral to the shop front and of sympathetic materials. Natural materials such as timber will be preferred to modern materials such as plastic and aluminium. Bulky internally lit projecting box signs will not normally be permitted. Indirect illumination and concealed lighting will be encouraged.
50. *Security blinds* - should be avoided if possible, but if not, should be internal and of a perforated grille type to provide a view of the window display. Shutter boxes should be avoided if possible, but if not, should be incorporated into the overall design of the shop front and not project from the facade.
51. General guidance is given in Planning Control Policy Note on Shopfronts (No. 4) available from the Council's Planning Control Section.

Advertisements

52. Many of the Borough's conservation areas are commercial in nature, and advertisements are an integral part of their character. However, any new signs should respect the scale and character of buildings and any architectural features that they possess. Large scale poster advertising is unlikely to be appropriate, even in the more commercial conservation areas. Traditional detailing should be maintained. Internally illuminated

box signs are not normally appropriate. For those conservation areas that are not primarily commercial in nature, only very small-scale signs, if any, would be appropriate.

53. General guidance is given in Planning Control Policy Note on The Display of Signs and Advertisements (No. 6).

Streetscape

54. Floorscape and street furniture often make a vital contribution to the character of a conservation area. Traditional surfaces and layouts should be retained wherever possible or reintroduced where there is historical evidence for them. In streets to be pedestrianised it is important to retain the traditional relationship between footways and carriageways including kerblines. Wall to wall surfaces are best avoided and the scale, texture, colour and laying patterns of any new materials should be sympathetic to the setting.
55. Much of the responsibility for floorscape and street furniture is with the Council. It will try to set an example through the quality of its own work.
56. The retention of original street paving materials and street furniture will be encouraged. Where it is necessary to lay new paving materials, the individual character of an area will be considered in the choice of materials. New street furniture and road signs should be properly integrated into the street-scheme and should be appropriate in design and location to the area's character.
57. Where Department of Transport regulations allow some flexibility in the design of signing in sensitive areas these will be applied. Such measures will include the use of paler narrower yellow parking restriction lines, wall mounting of signs and painting traffic sign poles in black or other permitted colour.

Open spaces

58. The visual quality of open spaces can be as important to the character of a conservation area as the design and form of the buildings themselves. Development which would lead to the loss of any open space which fulfils a valuable role in the townscape will be resisted. So too would development which would obstruct important views of and from conservation areas and listed buildings. Management of these important open spaces should be sympathetic to the character of historic areas and buildings.

External boundary features

59. Old walls, railings, gateposts and crossovers, should be retained where they contribute to the character of the area. Proposals for new means of enclosure should reflect the tradition of the area in terms of height, materials and style and location.

Submitting Planning Applications in a Conservation Area

60. It will not normally be possible for the Council to assess the effects on a conservation area on the basis of an outline planning application. For this reason full planning applications should be submitted for new development in conservation areas including all the necessary plans and elevations.
61. Application for demolition of building through conservation area consent will not be considered without a concurrent application for planning permission for redevelopment of the site.

Publicity and Consultation

62. Planning applications in conservation areas and applications for conservation area consent are subject to special publicity and consultation procedures.
- (a) The Local Authority must publish in a local newspaper, in Bolton's case the Bolton Evening News, a notice indicating the nature of the works which are the subject of the planning application, and stating that the plans are available for inspection at Bolton Town Hall for a period of 21 days from the date of the notice.**
 - (b) The Local Authority must display a site notice for at least seven days with the same information.**
 - (c) The Council cannot determine the application until the 21 day period has elapsed and it must take into account any representation that it receives.**
 - (d) The Council must notify English Heritage of any planning application where the development exceeds 3000 cubic metres or where the area of land to be developed exceeds 1000 square meters.**

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