

Conservation Areas

What is a Conservation Area?

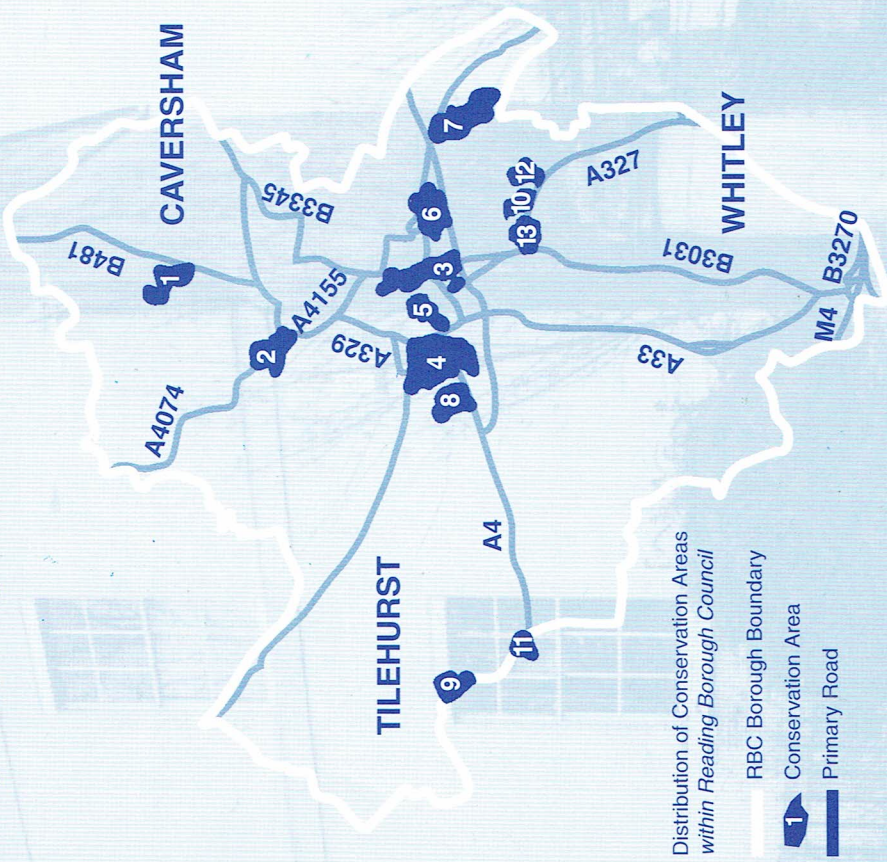
Conservation Areas within Reading are designated by Reading Borough Council and are defined in legislation as: "Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Conservation legislation's primary role aims to protect large groups of buildings and related open spaces.

The special interest of an area can be the result of a number of characteristics, such as an historic street pattern, traditional building styles, association with an historic event or figure, or a local industry or trade and will often be centred around a listed building.

Conservation Areas within Reading vary in character from Victorian suburbs at The Mount, to village centres at Horncastle and St Peter's and formal Georgian /Regency townscapes at Eldon Square. The designation of a conservation area helps to identify these important local characteristics and ensure they are properly considered if changes are proposed.

Where are the Conservation Areas in Reading?

There are currently 13 Conservation Areas within Reading. Detailed maps showing the boundary of each area are held by Reading Borough Council and are available for inspection at the Planning Reception, ground floor of the Civic Centre.



Area Name	Area Name
1 Surley Row	8 Downshire Square
2 St. Peters	9 Routh Lane Tilehurst
3 Market Place / London Street	10 The Mount
4 Russell St / Castle Hill	11 Horncastle
5 St. Mary's Butts / Castle Street	12 Redlands
6 Eldon Square	13 Christchurch
7 South Park	

Living in a Conservation Area

Reading Borough Council is committed to conserving and enhancing conservation areas. In practice this is carried out through the use of additional planning controls and increased attention to detailed environmental improvements. The council aims to promote the retention of traditional building materials. For example timber windows are preferred to plastic or similar replacement windows. Appropriate street furniture and planting is also sought.

In addition to the usual planning controls there are other works in Conservation Areas for which you will need further permission. This is in addition to regulations relating to house extensions, garden buildings, boundary walls, fences and advertisements. The list below is not definitive. It is always advisable, if you are thinking about carrying out work in a conservation area to first contact the planning department. Works, which need further permission include:

- *Demolition or partial demolition of some garden walls and fences*
- *Demolition or partial demolition of a building larger than 115 cubic metres in volume.*
- *Any works to trees*
- *Roof alterations e.g. adding a dormer window or the removal of chimney stacks.*
- *The addition of cladding to the outside of the house.*
- *Control over the installation of satellite dishes.*

Character and Appearance

The character and appearance of conservation areas are easily damaged through insensitive alterations, which can often be outside of planning control. Therefore it is important that residents and people who work in conservation areas respect the special qualities of the conservation area.

Businesses in Conservation Areas

Conservation area controls aim to protect the environmental quality of that area. Therefore there are controls on commercial properties within conservation areas. If any external alterations are proposed the planning department should be consulted. The design of shop fronts and advertisements is very important in conservation areas, in order to protect the character of the area any advertisements which are judged to be detrimental to the appearance of the area will be discouraged.

Demolition

Written Conservation Area Consent is required for the full or part demolition of any building or structure, including some outhouses and walls within a conservation area.

Some small structures may be exempt. However, if any demolition is considered it is best to contact the planning department to check if consent is required.

For advice relating to Planning and Conservation Areas contact:
Planning and Transport Strategy, Environment Directorate,
Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre,
Reading RG1 7TD
Tel: 0800 626540

Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas

If the building is listed then Listed Building Consent is required where any alterations or extensions as well as any form of demolition are proposed. For further information see 'A Guide to Listed building Consent'.

Works to Trees

Trees make a significant contribution to the character of a conservation area. 6 weeks prior written notice must be given to the planning department if you want to carry out any works to trees in a conservation area. The 6 week period enables the council to consider if a tree preservation order should be made. No works should be carried out during this period without written permission from the council.

Some trees in conservation areas already have the added protection of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). You must have the Council's consent before any works to these trees can be undertaken. For further information see "Trees in Reading - A Guide to Tree Preservation Orders".

Other useful Contacts and further information

English Heritage
23 Savile Row
London W1X 1AB
Tel: 0870 333 1181

Ancient Monuments Society
St. Ann's Vestry Hall
2 Church Entry
London EC4V 5HB

Department of Transport Local
Government and the Regions
Govt. Office for the South East
Bridge House,
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford, Surrey GU1 4GA
Tel: 020 7944 3000

Georgian Group
6 Fitzroy Square
London W1P 6DX
Tel: 020 3787 1720

Department of Culture
Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
Tel: 020 7211 6200

Society for the Protection of
Ancient Buildings
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY
Tel: 020 7377 1644

Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London W4 1TT
Tel: 020 8994 1019