

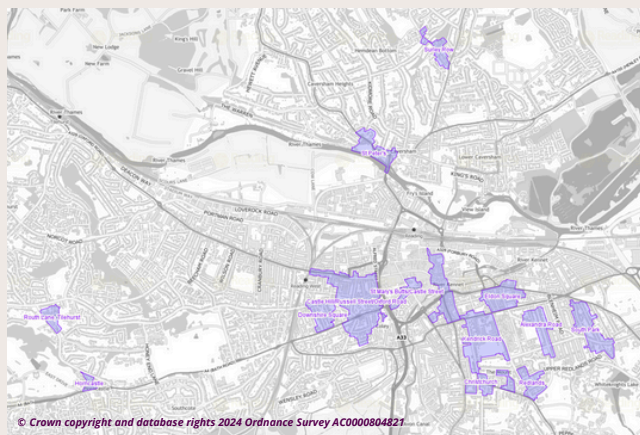


Figure 1: Conservation Areas in Reading (2024)

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation Areas are areas 'of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Within these designated areas, there are stricter planning controls to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the area special.

Conservation areas are designated by Reading Borough Council (RBC), and in total, there are 15 within the borough (Fig 1). Each of these has its own distinct character, townscape and appearance. Further information on the history and significance of each conservation area within Reading can be found within the Conservation Area Appraisals which are available on our website.

To find out whether you live in a conservation area, visit my.reading.gov.uk.

For further detail about conservation areas visit reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/

Obtaining Planning Permission

Planning Permission must be sought from the Council where development or works fall outside of PDR. In conservation areas, when deciding whether to grant or refuse planning permission, the Council considers the need to preserve or enhance the area's special character. Applications will be assessed against relevant heritage policies (amongst others) within Reading's Local Plan (found on our website).

Other Heritage Matters: Listed Buildings

Listed buildings form part of the historic environment, and there are a number within Reading's conservation areas. PDR are much reduced for listed buildings (and works within their curtilage) and in most cases planning permission and Listed Building Consent is required for external and internal works.

Other Heritage Matters: Trees

All trees within conservation areas above a certain size (75mm trunk diameter) are protected and anyone who wishes to cut down or prune a tree must give 6 weeks prior written notice to the Council. More information can be found on our website regarding this process. If a tree located within a conservation area is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), then a tree works application must be submitted to the Council.

Every effort has been made to ensure this advice is accurate as of 05/07/24. However, advice is not legally binding and is intended as an informal guide. It has not captured all PDR restrictions and excludes listed and ecclesiastical buildings. For the full list, please see the GPDO 2015. The GPDO is updated on a regular basis and therefore some of the above may be superseded.

Conservation Areas Guidance and Advice for Householders



Living in a Conservation Area

Conservation areas have special architectural or historic interest. Changes to properties should preserve or enhance this special character and appearance. Planning legislation and policies enable this to happen. This leaflet aims to assist property owners within Conservation Areas by providing an overview of these requirements.

Permitted Development Rights (PDR) & Planning Permission

Planning permission is required when works or changes of use that are being carried out meet the definition of 'development'[1] and permission must be gained from the Council before works/the use commence. However, PDR allow certain works to take place without the need to apply for permission (subject to conditions)[2].

Due to the historical and architectural interest of conservation areas, some PDRs are restricted in these locations. This means that planning permission is needed for particular works that affect the external appearance of the building that would usually be classed as PD in non-designated areas. Some changes of use are also more tightly controlled. Extra caution is therefore needed to ensure compliance with the law.

Works that Need Planning Permission

The next page summarises works that require planning permission if your property is located within any of Reading's 15 Conservation areas. It is taken from the main legislation relating to PDR[2]. This leaflet is specific to restrictions within conservation areas and should not be used for advice elsewhere.

Works to a House

The following refers to external works carried out to a house (and excludes flats). In a conservation area, in addition to the restrictions which apply everywhere, you would need permission for:

- An extension which goes beyond the rear wall of the original house by more than 3m (4m if a detached house);
- An extension which is more than a single storey and goes beyond the rear wall of the original house;
- An extension which goes beyond the side wall of the original house;
- Cladding any part of the exterior with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles;
- An extension that results in the creation of two additional storeys (if the existing house already has two or more storeys), or, one additional storey if the house consists of one storey only;
- Additions/alterations to the roof (dormers etc);
- The construction of any building, enclosure or swimming pool on the grounds of the property where it would be located between the side wall and the boundary of the house;
- The installation of chimneys, flues or vents on the main (front) wall of a house, or on a side wall fronting a highway;
- A microwave, antenna or satellite located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which is visible from the road or is on a building taller than 15m;
- The installation of solar panels where they front a road (also applies to flats);
- The installation of air source heat pumps where they are on a wall/roof fronting a road or is closer to the road than any other part of the building.

New or replacement windows, doors, roof and roof tiles and other external works not listed above will require planning permission unless the materials used are similar to the existing property.

This advice is intended as a guide only. It does not replace legislation and it is always recommended that you apply for a Lawful Development Certificate to obtain a definitive decision on whether or not your proposals fall under PDR.

Demolition in a Conservation Area

Planning permission is required for the demolition of:

- Any unlisted building that exceeds 115 cubic metres (measured externally); or
- Any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure more than 1m high where abutting a road, footpath or bridleway, waterway or open space, or, over 2m elsewhere.

Article 4 Directions

An Article 4 Direction is where the Council has removed specific PDR, meaning that planning permission is required for works that would usually comprise PDR. These directions are issued to preserve an area's appearance or character and can apply to any location within the Borough (not just conservation areas). Visit RBC's website[3] for the full list (18 in total) of Article 4 Directions.

[1] See planningportal.co.uk/permission

[2] Guidance is not exhaustive. For the full list of restrictions, see General Permitted Development Order (2015) as amended.

[3] See reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/article-4-directions/