

CONSERVATION AREAS IN EAST DORSET

GUSSAGE ALL SAINTS



Foreword

This document is based upon work carried out in 1994 to define the special qualities of the Conservation Area that was subsequently published as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the East Dorset Local Plan (see paragraphs 6.118 to 6.131 and accompanying policies BUCON 1 to 4 of the East Dorset Local Plan adopted 11 January 2002).

The text and illustrations of the original publication have been revised and updated to reflect any significant changes that have taken place in that time since the original survey and appraisal of the area were undertaken.

The appraisal provides guidance to those elements and characteristics that should be taken into account when considering proposed developments and other works requiring consent. The information contained in the appraisal will be treated as a material consideration by the Local Planning Authority when considering planning applications.

The revision does not extend to reviewing the boundaries of the designated area. This work will be undertaken between 2006 and 2010 in parallel with the Local Development Framework process, as currently programmed.

The maps used in the document are based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping currently available to the Council.

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Setting

Gussage All Saints lies in a narrow chalk-stream valley between Brockington and Sovell Downs. Gussage Brook flows from Farnham, deep in the Cranborne Chase, to its confluence with the River Allen at Bowerswain, a kilometer to the southeast of the village. Steep valley sides conceal the village from the wider landscape.

Views of the village from the valley are largely obscured by trees - Uphill from Amen corner looking west



From the valley, views of the village are largely obscured by trees and copses, except for the Church tower which forms a prominent feature.

Scope

The Conservation Area includes six listed buildings and a number of other buildings of local architectural or historic interest. Each makes a positive contribution to the character and identity of the village, together with gardens, paddocks and meadows that form their setting.

Church of All Saints, off Harley Lane at the north western edge of the village



The boundaries of the Conservation Area coincide by and large with the change in land-

use between open country and the village envelope. The edges of the village are well defined by hedgerows. These form an important feature of the village setting. Paddocks, meadows and large gardens are included on account of their importance as settings for buildings of architectural or historic importance and to their wider contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Gussage Brook and the water meadows to the south form distinctive features of the Conservation Area. For this reason the boundary has been extended to include the 19th century Ton Bridge. There are glimpses of the meadows from between buildings in the village street, and a wider view from the Drovers Inn. There are fine views of the valley and the surrounding down land from the churchyard.

Form

In common with many down-land settlements, the village has a strong linear pattern of development, running parallel to the brook. The historic Church of All Saints stands on elevated land at the north-west end of the village, flanked by the historically important Gussage House, the former Rectory to the south-east and Manor Farm to the north. These form the historic core of the village, with a scattering of small cottages extending down the village street towards Amen Corner. These are characteristically sited adjacent to, and at right angles, to the road. 20th century infill development has reinforced the linear form, but with most buildings set back from the highway.

Cottages set at right angles to the village street



At the northwest end of the village street, a group of cottages face directly onto the road, resulting in a more built-up appearance that

contrasts with the softer, more relaxed village character lower down the street. Brick boundary walls reinforce the built form of the village core.

The street then turns between the Church and Gussage House before crossing over the brook via a narrow bridge.

View to the west as the village street curves past the war memorial at the junction with Harley Lane



Low overhanging branches of a small copse obscure the view upstream. Downstream is an attractive view of the informal landscaped grounds of Gussage House with water meadow trees beyond. A twin arched bridge within the grounds form an attractive focal point.

Bridge within the grounds of Gussage House



Mead Lane joins the road near the bridge and runs parallel to the main street to Ton Bridge on the Wimborne St Giles road. The lane is an almost mirror image of main street, but serves only a handful of houses and remains clearly separate from the village.

Harley Lane is one of two former drove roads within the Conservation Area that connect the

water meadows with the nearby down land to the north. A public footpath running parallel to the village street immediately behind the rear gardens, links the two tracks with the Wimborne St Giles road further east. These form part of an extensive network of public paths that converge on the Jubilee Trail and provide access to the area's important archaeological sites.

Buildings

All Saints Church has walls of flint and rubble with ashlar dressings under tiled roofs. The chancel and nave of this Grade I listed building date from the 14th century. The lower stage of the tower is original, but the upper two stages are 15th century.



Access to the Church is by foot only, from Harley Lane, marked by a pair of brick pillars supporting simple iron gates. Overhead is an old lantern hung below a metal bar archway.

Gussage House (Grade II listed) is an imposing two-storeyed with attics house, set in spacious grounds at the northwest end of the village street facing the Church. It was originally built at the end of the 17th century but altered and extended in the 18th. The house is built of brick under plain clay roofs, though the east front is rendered and the west front, interestingly, is clad in mathematical tiles.

The house is surrounded by mellow brick walling and features –near the bridge- a fine pair of entrance pillars, with stone cappings and urns.

Close to the principal north front of the house, abutting the village street, is the Coach House, a charming brick building having a hipped plain

tile roof with tall chimneystack and single small dormer.

Manor Farm, tucked behind the north side of the Church, also has 17th origins with 18th century additions at the south end. The two-storeyed house has distinctive brick with flint banding, with a hipped slate roof and tall central chimneystack. The building is approached by a long drive from Harley Lane passing through well-maintained grounds and a small orchard that conceal the building from public view.

Manor Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) viewed from the churchyard



To the west of Manor Farm are three small traditional farm buildings each of which is of intrinsic architectural and historic interest. Constructed of a mixture of cob, brick and weatherboarding under peg tiled roofs, they contribute to the setting of the listed buildings, as well as having wider landscape importance.

Forming a loose grouping with the Church and Manor Farm is the former College Farm House, now comprising three dwellings. The oldest is Church Mead, a 17th century 1½ storey house with brick and flint banding under a tiled, ¾ hipped roof. The early 20th century (Edwardian) extension on the south east side has a strongly contrasting character, being altogether larger and more formal. Built of brick under a tiled roof the Edwardian element features three tall gables on the front elevation under which are transomed windows.

The brick and tiled outbuildings of the former farmhouse, comprising workshop, cart shed, storeroom, stabling and tackroom, have now been sensitively converted into a single detached dwelling called Shires Barn.

'Badgers' with Church Mead behind



College Farm today comprises a tight group of traditional and modern barns on the east side of Harley Lane. A well-maintained traditional barn, having weather-boarded walls under a peg-tiled roof, screens several more utilitarian modern barns from public view.

Vicarage Cottage and Church Cottage, on opposite sides of the village triangle, help make up the village core. Vicarage Cottage is importantly sited between the village street and the Church on the west side of the triangle. This simple two storey whitewashed cottage with slate roof faces south, but its other elevations are equally visible from the churchyard. The building features a rich mixture of materials on its northwest side. The rear elevation that overlooks the churchyard has attractive small first floor windows. Various single storey modern additions having flat roofs are largely concealed from view on account of the change in levels.

Church Cottage



Church Cottage flanks directly onto the village street. It is one of the earliest buildings in the village having walls of cob under a thatched roof, though much altered and extended and consequently not listed. It is nevertheless of

local interest on account of its intrinsic character and the contribution that the older part makes to the street scene. The Coach House and Church Cottage comprise the eastern part of the village core. Other significant buildings within this group are Holly Tree Cottage, College Farm Cottages, Peel House and the Old Bakery. Of this group, Holly Tree Cottage is the only building set back a little way from the road, but it still impacts on the street scene on account of its elevated position and short front garden. This well-proportioned two storey village house features Flemish bond brickwork with burnt headers under a simple Bridgewater tile roof, together with tall chimneystacks, one at each end of the ridge.

The linear form of the village shows in this view along the village street. Most buildings are set back from highway or sited end on to the street



College Farm Cottages



College Farm Cottages comprise a pair of white rendered cottages fronting the village street with a low-pitched slate hipped roof pierced by tall chimneystacks.

Midway down the village street, Apple Tree House is a 19th brick house having a symmetrical, well-proportioned front elevation, and attractive brick and flint banding on the northwest gable. A lower, wing at the rear appears much older. This is whitewashed render and features a single tall chimneystack.

The Drovers Inn (formerly the 'Earl Haig') is sited on elevated land overlooking the valley and down-land beyond, its eastern side coinciding with the drove road that leads to Brockington Down. The massive internal chimneybreast and cob construction suggest a potentially very early dating. The single storey thatched roof extension on the south east side, however, is a modern addition.

The Drovers Inn



Peel House and the former post office follow the line of the gently curving village street. These simple, well-proportioned colour-washed cottages have tiled roofs with tall chimneystacks at each end of the ridge.

Further east, the older cottages are scattered loosely down the village street. And with most of the more recent dwellings being set well back behind front gardens, the appearance of this part of the village is much softer and informal.

'Teachers' is an attractive Victorian cottage having distinctive walls of banded brick and flint under a plain tiled roof, its four decorative dormers and tall chimneystacks adding to its character. Virginia Cottage, set back next-door, has whitewashed rendered walls under a concrete tiled roof. This too is a well-proportioned traditional house with chimneystacks.

Opposite, the attractive Sweet Apple Farm abuts the village street end-on. This narrow-span cottage faces southeast, overlooking a meadow which forms its setting. The cottage, which has rendered walls under a slate roof, has a simple, symmetrical main façade, with small casement windows around a central porch

and chimneystacks positioned at each end of the ridge. At its southern end, an extension of similar form and materials has been added. Its blank gable wall means that architectural interest remains focused on the cottage.

Sweet Apple Farm



Sweet Apple Farm is one of three important village houses that abut end-on to the village street and all are to be found in this part of the village. On the southeast side of the meadow is Elm Tree Cottage, a rare timber-framed cottage with brick nogging, under a thatched roof. It is listed as being of special architectural and historic interest, Grade II.

Elm Tree Cottage (Grade II Listed Building)



Looking down the village street, it is seen in relation to Cobwebs, another vernacular cottage abutting the highway. A recent pair of semi-detached houses is set well back from the road ensuring the historic pattern of development is preserved.

Cobwebs, which is also listed Grade II, is a single-storey with attics thatched cottage with cob walls. A recent small extension has been sensitively handled.

Standing at the southern end of the village street at Amen Corner is Amen Cottage. Like Church Cottage at the other end of the lane, its vernacular style and materials provide an attractive entrance to the village street, but spoilt a little by various modern alterations.

At the western end, and signaling the edge of the village, stands 'Green Meads', another thatched cottage sited end-on to the road having white-painted brick walls.

Green Meads sited end-on to the street at the western end of the village



Along the street are a number of incidental buildings: garages, barns and sheds, and the village social club, constructed of black corrugated iron or timber. These structures offer a contrast in scale and materials and have an informal, rural character entirely consistent with the village and should be preserved wherever possible.

A traditional barn opposite College Farm, having boarded sides and peg-tile roof, is a reminder of the village's agricultural past. Although not listed, it is well cared for by the owners of the farm. There are also fine brick barns associated with Manor Farm.

Walls

Boundary walls are a feature of the village core, in the vicinity of the Church and Gussage House; street boundaries become increasingly softer towards the eastern end of the village.

The churchyard is bounded by brick walls on its east and north sides and by rendered cob walling capped with tiles to the south and west. The southern wall continues northwest to connect with the group of small barns near Manor Farm. Adjoining the cob wall, near the west corner of the churchyard, is an old brick

wall that extends southwards to enclose the 1980's housing development, 'Paddock House' and 'Roseberry Topping'. The paddock in front of the latter is enclosed with one-metre high brick walling capped with round copings, which then continues along the west side of Harley Lane.

Brick walls enclose Gussage House, which reinforce the cohesion of the village core and give it a degree of formality. Near the bridge stands the formal entrance with its tall gate pillars, beyond which the boundary wall is capped with moulded stone copings. At the rear of the house enclosing the former kitchen garden is a fine old lichen-covered brick wall having circular vents.

Gate piers and gate to Holly Tree Cottage



Some boundary walls are locally significant down the village street, such as in front of Church Cottage, Virginia Cottage and Holly Tree Cottage. The latter has sturdy gate pillars in Green Sandstone supporting an old gothic style iron gate. An attractive banded brick and flint wall encloses the front garden of Elm Tree Cottage.

Flint and brick boundary wall to Elm Tree Cottage



Open Spaces

The water meadows on the south side of the Gussage Brook and gardens and paddocks on the north side are of key importance to the character of the conservation area. They collectively provide the settings for buildings of architectural and historic interest (both in the local as well as national context) and relate the settlement to its wider landscape.

The meadow between Sweet Apple Farm and Elm Tree Cottage helps tie the village with its landscape setting. Its open character allows views from the drove road to the down-land beyond, and provides an attractive setting to the surrounding buildings.

The large gardens, often with modern dwellings sited well back from the road, allow an abundance of trees and other vegetation. Thus views down the village street tend to focus on the older buildings, with spaces between.

On the north side of the village street, all the properties between Jasmine Cottage and The Old House follow a building line set well back from the road. From The Old House the curtilages are much smaller and buildings converge on the road. Behind these smaller gardens is an elevated paddock that extends to Harley Lane. The paddock preserves the strong linear form and historic character of the village. From Harley Lane views across the paddock extend over the dwellings below to the hillside on the opposite side of the valley. The site's elevated position acts as a backdrop and means of enclosure to the village.

There are equally important open spaces within the western end of the village. The churchyard is a small enclosed space with the Grade I listed Church at its western end. A more recent graveyard lies on the south-facing slope accessed through the cob wall. This space, separated from the village by high walls, looks outward to the surrounding landscape. The adjacent farmland forms the setting for the elevated Church and for the small cluster of farm buildings near Manor Farm.

Approach to Manor Farm



The green space to the east of Manor Farm provides a very attractive setting to the Farmhouse, as well as other buildings in the immediate vicinity. Its garden to the south creates an attractive space between Manor House and Church. Similarly generous sized gardens around Church Mead and Shire's Barn create quality spaces and a relaxed settlement pattern.

On the west side of the lane near the bridge are two open spaces, one comprising a regular shaped walled paddock; the other, to the south of the stream, a wooded copse (see below). The open paddock allows views of the Church between Vicarage Cottage and Paddock House.

The garden of Gussage House occupies an important position in the village. Gussage Brook divides the lawned garden from the informal paddock to the south, linked by substantial formal hedges. Its informal water-meadow character has been successfully preserved.

There are two grassy roadside triangles, at road junctions to the north and south of the Brook respectively, with soft verges linking the two, which together reinforce the informal village character. A stone cross War Memorial acts as

a focal point to the Harley Lane junction. The Mead Lane junction features a traditional finger post.

Traditional finger post at the Mead Lane junction



Treescape

Within the conservation area, trees provide enclosure and act as a foil to the buildings. Trees are important throughout the village, but those sited at the western end comprise the finest specimens. Yews, beech, ash and horse chestnut within the grounds of Gussage House, and chestnuts and sycamores in Harley Lane are particularly noteworthy. The latter create a tunnel effect from the village core to the open chalk-land nearby.

Prominent tree group in Harley Lane



A group of fruit trees near the entrance to Manor Farm is a reminder of times when orchards were common in villages. Of more visual significance are the Scots Pine within the garden and the adjoining churchyard.

Within the water meadows are important single specimens and groups of walnut, willow and poplar. To the south of the Mead Lane junction

are copses of poplar; the corner site immediately to the west contains a mixture of ash, walnut, chestnut and sycamore. Together with the groups of trees around Gussage House and Harley Lane, the treescape provides height, enclosure and sense of intimacy to the village street and blocks out views of the surrounding open landscape.



Newly planted trees within gardens of the more recent developments are helping to reinforce the sylvan setting of the village. It is important that appropriate native species are selected that blend with the wider landscape, especially avoiding those having garish foliage. Front boundary hedges are important as they provide a soft, green edge to the village street and act as a foil and screen to buildings thus reinforcing the informal rural character of the village.



At the eastern end of the village the enclosure is of a different kind. The narrow village lane is bounded by high hedges and hedge-banks that continue to Amen Corner and beyond into Custard Hill. The resulting tunnel effect provides a dramatic entrance to the conservation area. Looking west, it frames views of the two listed cottages; looking east, it provides an attractive

enclosed setting for these important buildings.

Streetscape

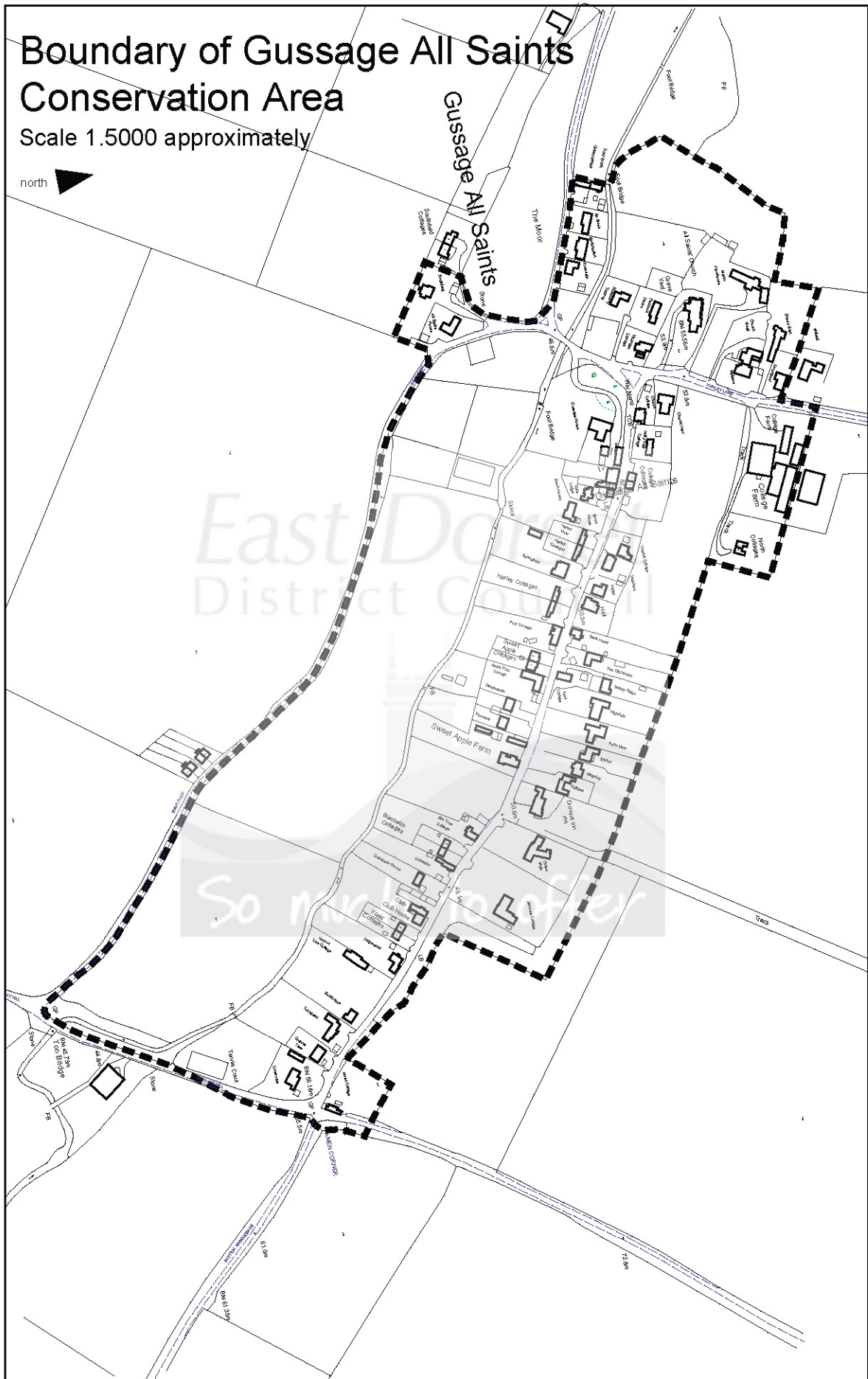
There are many architectural and townscape details that add depth to the character of the conservation area. These include many original windows and doors, porches and chimneystacks; period gates and moss and lichen-covered old walls. The stone urns over the entrance pillars to Gussage House add a touch of refinement; the former oil lamp over the Church entrance a rather more modest gesture. The K6 telephone box on the grass verge opposite Gussage House and red post box near Peel House are distinctive streetscape features currently taken for granted.



The finger post at the Mead Lane junction forms another incidental but valued rural feature as does the stone cross at Harley Lane junction .

Boundary of Gussage All Saints Conservation Area

Scale 1:5000 approximately



Planning Policy in Conservation Areas

East Dorset has many attractive villages of special architectural or historic interest.

In order to protect their character and appearance, the best of these, including the historic centre of Wimborne Minster, have been designated as Conservation Areas by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Under this legislation additional planning controls are exercised by the Council within designated Conservation Areas in order to preserve and enhance those aspects of character and appearance that define an area's special interest.

These include controls over the demolition of most unlisted buildings. An application for Conservation Area Consent is needed for the demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area.

The Council encourages the retention of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Any proposals which involve demolition of existing buildings will be carefully assessed for their impact upon the character of the area. The local planning authority will also need full details about what is proposed for the site after demolition.

Certain types of development, which elsewhere are normally classified as permitted development (such as the insertion of dormer windows in roof slopes, the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway) will require planning permission.

Guidance and application forms can be obtained from the Planning and Building Control Division.

Trees

Trees are an invaluable visual asset to the character and setting of many Conservation Areas.

Trees in Conservation Areas may already be protected by a Tree Preservation Order and the Courts can impose heavy fines for unauthorised felling or lopping.

In addition to these controls, and in recognition of the contribution that trees can make to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area special provisions apply to the lopping or felling of other trees which are not otherwise protected. Anyone wishing to fell or lop such trees needs to notify the Council in writing six weeks before carrying out any work.

Householders are also encouraged to seek advice from the Department on the management of their trees. By taking the correct action now mature trees can be made safer and their lives extended.

New Development

When contemplating alterations to existing buildings or the construction of new buildings within a Conservation Area it is advisable to obtain the views of your local Planning Officer at an early stage. The Department is glad to help and the advice is totally impartial and free of charge.

When considering applications for new development, the Council as Local Planning Authority takes particular care to ensure that it fits in satisfactorily with the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Positioning, massing, design and choice of materials are of particular importance, as well as the visual impact of 'building over' an area of hitherto open land.

The special character of these areas stem not only from the age, disposition and architectural interest of the buildings, but also from the treatment of the spaces in between.

The presence of gardens, paddocks, soft verges, hedges and old boundary walls contribute greatly to the individual sense of place.

Applications for new development must demonstrate that the proposal will harmonise with the Conservation Area i.e. that it will preserve or enhance its character. Potential applicants are strongly advised to seek proper professional advice.

Therefore when considering such applications the local planning authority will pay particular attention to the following elements of the design:

1. the positioning of the building and its relationship with adjoining buildings, existing trees or other features;

2. the proposed building materials, particularly the walls and roof, and their suitability to the area and in relation to neighbouring buildings;
3. the proportions, mass and scale of the proposal and their relationship with the area in general and adjoining buildings in particular.
4. whether the proposed development might adversely affect existing trees, hedges or other natural features of the site.

In some cases it may be necessary to reproduce an historic style of architecture in order to match existing buildings. Generally, however, the Council encourages new construction to be designed in a modern idiom provided the criteria listed above are applied. Poor copies or imitations of architectural styles detract from the genuine older buildings and are normally discouraged.

Full details of any proposed development must be submitted, showing existing site conditions with the proposals clearly marked. Details of the elevational treatment, including windows and doors, will normally be required. In many instances the planning authority will expect details of hard and soft landscaping including a specification of all the proposed materials.

Conservation Area analysis

The District Council has carried out and published detailed studies of the Conservation Areas to identify those elements which contribute towards the unique character of each area. Any proposal which has an adverse effect on these features will not be permitted. Proposals that can be seen to enhance the Conservation Area will be encouraged.

Grants

Grants may be available from the District Council towards the alleviation of eyesores, or measures that improve the street scene, such as tree-planting, hedging or other boundary treatments. Grants or loans may also be available towards the repair of Listed Buildings, particularly where such repairs make an impact on the Conservation Area.

Design and Conservation Services in East Dorset

Conserving the best features of our environment, our historic towns, villages and countryside, is one of the most important of our planning functions.

Historic Buildings

Our buildings are a record of our architectural and social history. As a society, we hold them in trust for future generations to cherish and enjoy. Investment in our architectural heritage assists local and regional social and economic development

The supply of buildings of the eighteenth century and earlier is finite; once demolished they are lost forever. Others suffer almost the same fate from alterations made without regard to their original design and character.

Historic buildings require special care if their character, which relies upon traditional building materials and practices peculiar to each region, is not to be spoilt by insensitive alterations or inappropriate methods of repair.

Owners of Listed Buildings contemplating altering or extending their building are advised to obtain Guidance Notes obtainable free from the Department.

An important function of the Design and Conservation Section is to advise owners of historic buildings and assist in achieving solutions which preserves their intrinsic interest.

The Section can help seek out the right materials for the job and advise on the correct method of repair.

It can also provide advice on both the law relating to listed buildings and sources of financial assistance.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are groups of buildings, villages or areas of towns having special architectural and townscape interest, the character of which should be preserved and enhanced.

East Dorset has 17 Conservation Areas, which range in size and nature from small villages such as Almer to the historic town centre of Wimborne Minster.

The siting, design and materials of new development, or alterations to existing buildings, are scrutinised by the Department to ensure that the character of such areas are protected.

Since 1980 the Council has invested in a programme of environmental improvements within the centre of Wimborne Minster. The effect of these measures has been to create an attractive place for residents and visitors to shop and to enjoy.

Designated Conservation Areas in East Dorset



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Advice

For advice on any aspect of the Council's building conservation work, the availability of financial assistance or to discuss your individual building, please contact our Design and Conservation Leader Ray Bird, or his assistant Alan Turner on 01202 886201 or e-mail: planning@eastdorset.gov.uk.