WHAT CONSENTS ARE NEEDED?

It is important that proposed alterations in a Conservation Area are sympathetic to its character. Stricter design controls, therefore, apply. You may need one or more of the following types of permission from the Council before doing work to your property:

Planning Permission for development which materially affects the appearance or use of buildings or land. This can include, for example, re-roofing and altering windows, extensions and new buildings. Some minor forms of development are classed as "permitted development" and are normally exempt. But in some Conservation Areas, where permitted development might harm their character, "Article 4 Directions" have been made withdrawing this exemption. In such cases planning permission is now needed from the Council (for Article 4 Direction controls, see the leaflets for individual Conservation Areas).

Conservation Area Consent for demolition of all or a substantial part of a building.

Listed Building Consent for external and internal works which affect the character of a Listed Building (see the conservation leaflet on Listed Buildings).

Work to Trees trees in Conservation Areas are protected because they often contribute to the Area's character. If a tree is in a Tree Preservation Order, consent is needed to prune or fell it. For other trees, six weeks notice must be given of proposed work (this gives an opportunity to assess the amenity value of the tree and if necessary make a Tree Preservation Order to give it long-term protection).

Consent to Display an Advertisement

Building Regulations Approval for structural work to buildings to ensure health and safety standards are met.

Although there are exemptions, the exact rules and regulations are complicated. Should work be carried out without the necessary permission it may have to be altered or removed at the owner's expense. Therefore, you are strongly recommended to seek the Council's advice before carrying out any work to your property.

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet gives general guidance for residents and property owners on how Conservation Areas should be preserved. Separate leaflets describe individual Conservation Areas, their special interest and any special planning controls which apply to them. Other leaflets are also available on a number of different conservation and planning topics.

Southend's historic areas have special value for the community. They are visible links with our past, they are attractive contrasts to modern environments and they can help strengthen the local economy. So it is important to ensure that when changes are necessary, they protect the area's character and bring about improvements. Designating them as Conservation Areas helps do this.

A Conservation Area is "an area of special architectural or historic interest" with a character which is "desirable to preserve or enhance" (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas)Act, 1990). Its character will come from a range of factors like the design of its buildings, their materials and setting, street alignment, street furniture, public and private open spaces, trees and landscape.

Once designated, the Conservation Area needs everyone's help to protect its character and keep it special. The Council will protect and enhance it as far as possible by controlling development, directing resources into the area and encouraging the care its buildings. But it also needs the support of owners and residents if this is to be fully achieved.

GRANTS

To encourage the preservation of buildings in Conservation Areas, grants may be available for repairs and reinstatements of traditional architectural features. Further details of the current grant schemes are outlined in the Conservation Grants leaflet.

ADVICE AND CONTACTS

Officers from the Technical Services Department are available to offer practical and technical advice on conservation and the need for consent. Contacts and sources of further information are given in a separate conservation leaflet.
GUIDANCE FOR YOUR PROPERTY

The following advice applies to some of the features of particular importance to the character of Conservation Areas, where they are visible to the public. If you have a property in a Conservation Area, please follow it when considering changes and help keep your property and area special.

First, three basic principles:

**Maintenance** - regular maintenance is needed to protect original features. But if more extensive work is found necessary, repair rather than replacement should be the first option and will often be better value.

**Materials and Designs** - when considering alterations or repairs to the property, original materials and designs should be respected.

**Enhancement** - take the opportunity to enhance the property when considering alterations, by restoring any missing features and improving poorly designed alterations of the past.

### WINDOWS

Traditional windows, especially timber sliding sashes, are vital for the character of Conservation Areas. Original windows can be given a new lease of life by overhauling them and installing draft proofing brushes in the sash rebates. Secondary glazing is also acceptable if it is unobtrusive.

If replacement or reinstatement is necessary, purpose-made windows to match the original materials and external appearance should be used. The new window should be of good quality, softwood; be painted (not stained) use of Sadolin or a similar paint will reduce future maintenance needs; copy the original pattern of glazing bars and horns, if any - glazing bars should be built into the sash and not stuck on to the glass; use the original method of opening; retain or restore the dimensions of the original window opening and the position of the frame within the opening - most openings are well-proportioned and most frames in older brick buildings are well set back from the face of the wall to give weather-protection, shadow and character; give adequate ventilation; retain decorative surrounds - they give elegance and distinction to many Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

### DOORS AND PORCHES

Original front doors of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings are well proportioned and have good detailing. They tend to be larger than standardised modern doors, sometimes have a fanlight, and help to give the property distinction. Original front doors should normally be retained and repaired when necessary. If this proves impossible, the new door should be similar in design and dimensions to the original, and should not have an over emphasis on glass. Original decorative surrounds to porches and doors should be retained.

Recessed porch areas give shadow and interest to the face of many buildings and should not normally be enclosed with doors or new porches. New porches will only be acceptable where they complement the original design of the facade and use traditional materials. Where a house is being converted to flats, the original entrance door should be retained or restored. Entrance doors to individual flats should be contained within the building behind the original entrance.

### BALCONIES

Balconies are attractive features of some Conservation Areas and should not be altered. Unfortunately, some have been enclosed by a variety of windows and additions and the character of each property has been impaired. If repairs are needed, consider reinstating the original style of balcony. The old patterns of iron railings are often available and reinstatement would greatly add to the character of the property. Some balconies in Clifftown have successfully been restored in this way.

### OUTSIDE WALLS AND DECORATION

Yellow stock brick and soft red brick are typical local materials and give attractive "warm" tones and texture to facades. They are sometimes combined for decorative effect.

Facing brickwork, therefore, should not normally be rendered or painted. If it suffers from damp, dirt or deterioration, alternatives should first be considered, such as cleaning with an appropriate solvent, repointing and treating it with a transparent microporous solution. Render and cement-based masonry paints might increase problems of damp by trapping moisture within the brickwork. If brickwork has already been painted, it may be possible to clean it off, but ensure first that the proposed method will not damage the face of the bricks.

Repointing also needs care. It should match the colour and style of the original and not extend over the face of bricks or make joints appear wider. To achieve this it may need to be slightly recessed. The mortar mix needs to include lime and be the right strength for the bricks - too strong a mix will force damp into the bricks and damage their surface.

Decorative features, like brick arches to openings, mouldings to window and door surrounds, string courses, frizes, cornices and stone or terracotta panels, which add interest to buildings should be retained.

Traditional feather-edged weatherboarding is also an important local building material and should always be retained.

### ROOFS & CHIMNEYS

Welsh slate is widely used for 18th and 19th century buildings; clay tiles (usually plain) are typical of later buildings. Both are natural materials which weather well to produce attractive roof surfaces. They give unity to terraces semi-detached buildings and help establish the character of the Area. Finials and decorative ridge tiles are also important features of some older buildings.

Re-roofing should put back the original materials and designs. For slate roofs, it may be possible to re-use some of the existing slates to help keep costs down. In some instances, good quality artificial slate may be an acceptable alternative for a detached building or where adjoining buildings are re-roofed together.

Stacks and pots usually emphasise the roofline and in most cases should not be removed. Some stacks have intricate detailing which adds to the character of the property and should be retained.

### HARDSTANDINGS AND BOUNDARIES

In the Borough’s Conservation Areas there is generally a good balance between the visual “hardness” of buildings and roofs and the “softness” of gardens and planted open areas. Front gardens, in particular, should be maintained as planted areas wherever possible.

Hardstandings in front gardens harm the appearance of individual properties and the Area’s character if badly designed. They will only be acceptable if no reasonable alternative to parking is possible, and there is adequate space in the garden to allow a good design incorporating a suitable surface, landscaping and partial enclosure of the frontage with a traditional boundary wall or railings. It should not involve the loss of mature trees.

The appearance of many older properties has been eroded by the loss of traditional front boundaries - usually brick walls and stone copings (sometimes topped by iron railings), between substantial brick piers and iron gates. Their restoration would greatly enhance Conservation Areas and is encouraged - advice on original designs can be given.