

# Business Owners & Residents Guide

## Barking Town Centre & Abbey Conservation Area

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Information and guidance about the conservation area and what it means for you

# Barking Town Centre and Abbey Conservation Area

## Information and Guidance

This guide is for the owners of businesses in the conservation area as well as homeowners and those occupying and looking after buildings in the area. The guide provides information about the conservation area designation, how to look after its historic buildings, what approvals are needed when making changes to buildings and where to find more detailed advice including the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the area.

### Guide Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| What is a conservation area?   | 02 |
| Which area is covered by the Barking Town Centre and Abbey Conservation Area?  | 02 |
| What is special about the Barking Town Centre and Abbey Conservation Area?     | 02 |
| What does owning or renting a building in the conservation area mean for me?   | 03 |
| Why is living and working in a conservation area a good thing?                 | 03 |
| Why should I invest in my historic building?                                   | 03 |
| How does my building contribute to the conservation area?                      | 04 |
| What types of features contribute to the conservation area?                    | 05 |
| Maintenance & Repair - Why is it important to maintain and repair my building? | 06 |
| What causes older buildings to decay?  | 06 |
| What is maintenance?   | 06 |
| What is a repair?  | 06 |
| How do I maintain and repair my building?                                      | 06 |
| Making changes to my building  | 09 |
| What does designation mean and how does it affect me?                          | 09 |
| What approval do I need if I want to change my building?                       | 09 |
| What happens if I do not get approval for my changes?                          | 10 |
| What can I do to enhance the conservation area?                                | 11 |
| Where can I find more information?   | 13 |

## What is a conservation area?

### What is a conservation area?

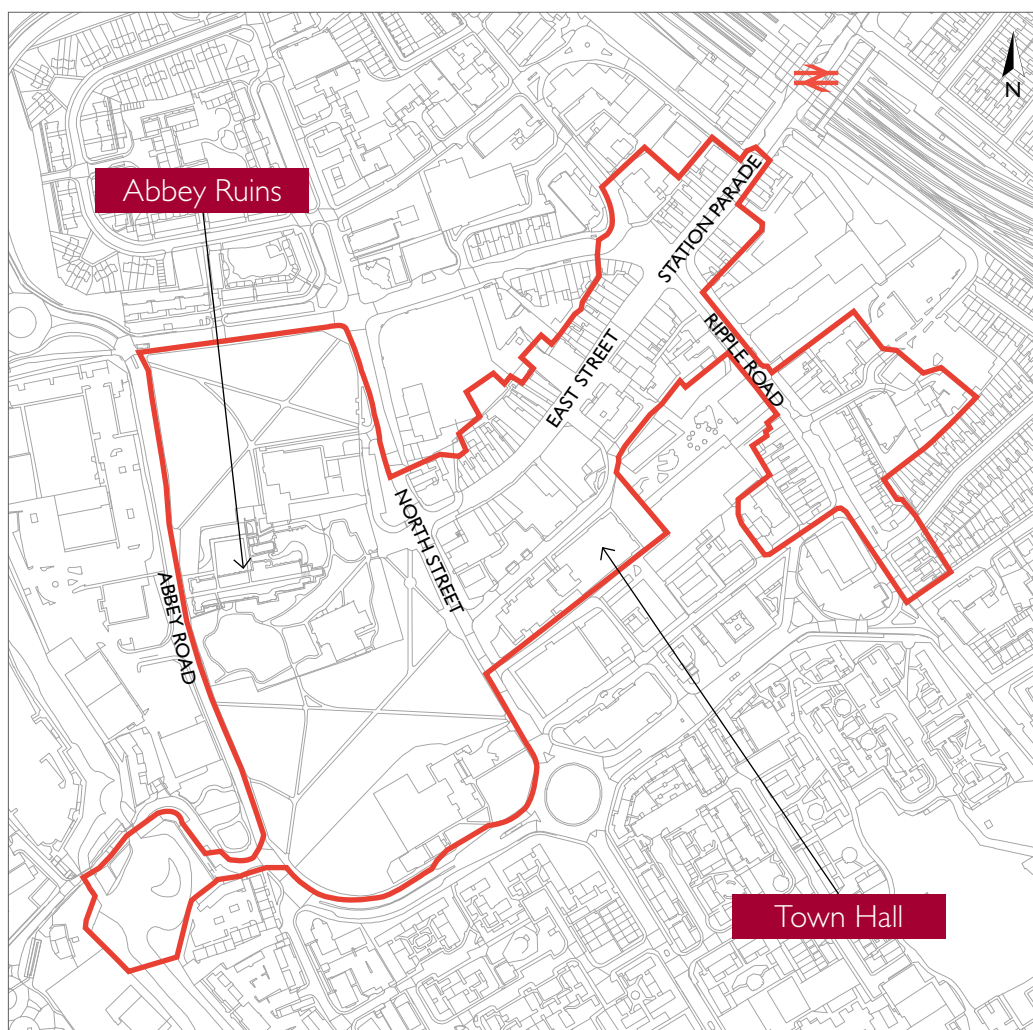
A conservation area is an area which is protected because of its special historic character and appearance. The designation recognises the quality of a place as a whole which comes from the combination of individual buildings, streets, green spaces, trees and other features. Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities and are a statutory designation.

### Which area is covered by the Barking Town Centre and Abbey Conservation Area?

The conservation area consists of the civic and commercial centre of Barking, focused along East Street and Ripple Road, and St Margaret's Church and the remains of Barking Abbey set within Abbey Green park. The conservation area also includes the town quay on the River Roding.



View along East Street



The conservation area boundary is outlined in red

### What is special about the Barking Town Centre and Abbey Conservation Area?

Barking has an illustrious history stretching back nearly 1500 years and has evolved from a small rural settlement dominated by Barking Abbey to the bustling retail and civic hub the town is today. Fishing and other industries were once important to the town to be replaced by retail as the town became a commuter suburb of London. The town centre retains its Victorian character and thriving market which ideally contrast with the open public spaces of Abbey Green and the town quay.

## What does owning or renting a building in the conservation area mean for me?

### What does owning or renting a building in the conservation area mean for me?

To protect what is special about the conservation area, it is important that buildings within it are properly looked after by both their owners and anyone who occupies them. See the 'Maintenance and Repair' section on pages 6 to 8 for more information. Changes to the external appearance of buildings in the conservation area might require planning permission from the local planning authority, as will any demolition of buildings or works to trees. More information can be found in the 'Making Changes to my Building' section on pages 9 and 10.

### Why is living and working in a conservation area a good thing?

Research undertaken by Historic England, the government's adviser on the historic environment, shows there are many reasons why having a business or property in a historic area is a good thing. Some of the most important are listed below and more information can be found in the Heritage Counts survey: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/>.

### Why should I invest in my historic building?

Evidence shows that investing in the historic environment can successfully increase footfall and reduce vacancy rates. People also spend more in their local economy after investment in the historic environment has taken place.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund are investing £1.15m in the heritage of Barking Town Centre as part of their Townscape Heritage Initiative. It is important the local community builds upon this investment to realise the benefits high-quality heritage can bring. See pages 11 and 12 for information about the changes you can make to your building which will enhance the conservation area.

A 2018 survey showed that 62% of businesses located in historic buildings said the historic nature of their building improved their business.

# 62%

A 2018 survey of commercial businesses occupying listed buildings found the main advantage of occupying a listed building



is that it "contributes to the positive atmosphere of the surrounding area" and it "provides a positive exterior appearance".

A 2017 study in English cities found that proximity to a listed building increased property prices by between 4.4% and 10.3%.

Analysis shows that in 2016 house prices were 50% higher in town centre conservation areas and 33% higher in urban residential conservation areas relative to comparable non-conservation areas.

There is a 23% price premium for homes in conservation areas according to a 2012 survey.



# 82%

A survey of estate agents in 2009 found that 82% stated that original features added to a property's value.

## How does my building contribute to the conservation area?

Buildings in the conservation area contribute to its special character to different degrees and some also have their own individual heritage designations. Every building in the conservation areas has been reviewed and been placed in a category depending on how it contributes to the conservation area. To find out how your building contributes, just find it on the map below.

### Listed Buildings

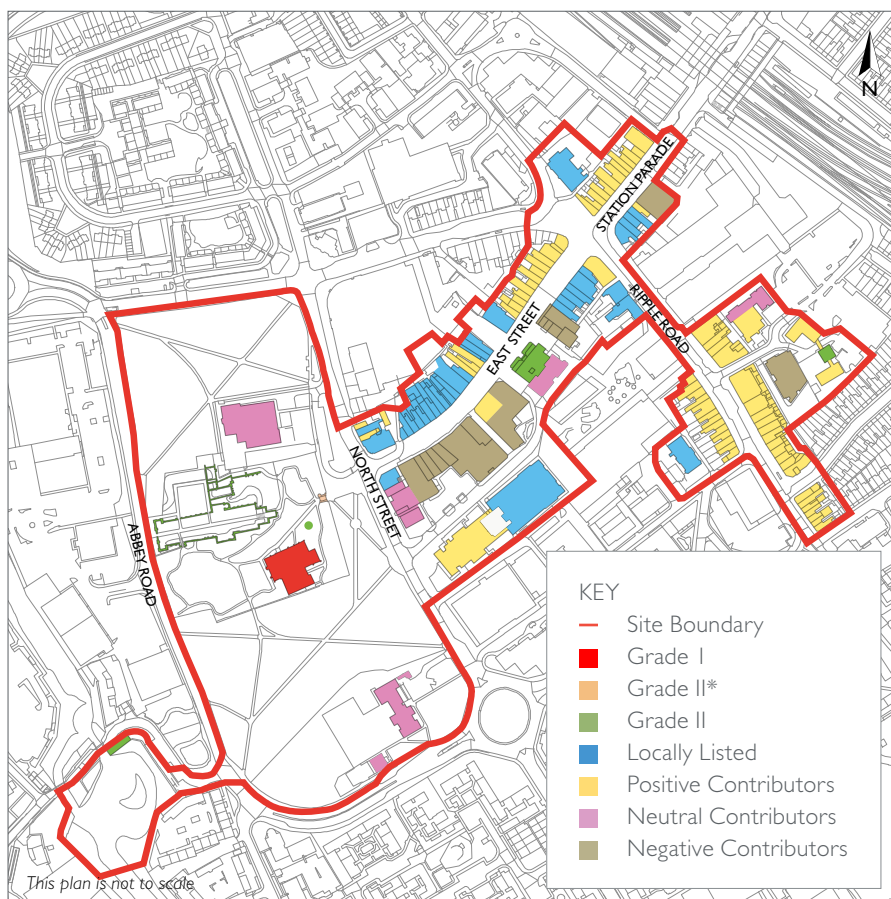
Listed buildings are designated because of their architectural or historic interest and are of national importance. There are around 500,000 listed buildings in England ranging from ancient churches to modernist office buildings. Virtually all buildings built before 1700 are listed and most built between 1700 and 1850, more recent buildings need to meet stricter criteria to qualify. There are three grades of listed building, Grade I being the most important, then Grade II\* and Grade II. However, all listed buildings are treated the same in planning decisions,

no matter what grade they are. Listing is a statutory designation managed by Historic England on behalf of the government.

Listed buildings are protected and therefore any work which may affect their character or fabric requires listed building consent from the local planning authority. It is recommended advice be sought from the local planning authority when considering any works to a listed building.

### Locally Listed Buildings

Locally listed buildings are those which do not meet the criteria for national designation as listed buildings but are of local architectural or historic interest. They have some special interest but not to the same degree as statutorily listed buildings. A local listing designation is taken into consideration in planning decisions when changes to a building are proposed.



### Positive Buildings

Positive buildings are those which do not meet the criteria for inclusion on the statutory or local lists but still make a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area, which should be preserved.

### Neutral and Detracting Buildings

Neutral buildings are those which neither make a positive contribution nor unduly detract from the character of the conservation area. Detracting buildings are those which are considered to make a negative contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are opportunities to improve the conservation area by making positive changes to buildings in these categories.

Buildings in the Barking Abbey and Town Centre Conservation Area.

## How does my building contribute to the conservation area?

### What types of features contribute to the conservation area?

It is the overall appearance of the conservation area that makes it special. This includes how tall buildings are, what they are used for, what they are made of and what features they have.

In Barking most buildings are two or three storeys high, although there are a couple of slightly taller buildings, these are not typical.

Buildings in the conservation area are mainly in retail use with residential flats above. There are also schools and places of worship and the Town Hall is also in the designated area. The western half of the conservation area is mainly public open space formed by Abbey Green and the town quay.

There is a wide variety of architectural styles including types of Victorian, Neo-Tudor and Modernist. The predominant building materials are red and brown brick. However, some buildings are rendered or painted. The exceptions to this are the medieval buildings of Curfew Tower and St Margaret's Church, which are built of stone.

Architectural features include pilasters, friezes, cornices, window surrounds and quoining and these are often picked out in render or stone and sometimes have carved decoration. Grander buildings, such as the former Magistrates' Court, have richer decoration.

Most buildings have retail units at ground floor, unfortunately, most historic shopfronts have been lost or altered but many retain features including stone console brackets and granite pilasters. See page 11 for more information about shop front features.



*The medieval Curfew Tower is one of the few buildings in the conservation area to be constructed in stone*



*The former Magistrates Court has lots of decoration and is one of the grandest buildings in the conservation area*



*Most buildings in the conservation area are terraced with shops at ground floor and some historic decorative features above*

## Maintenance and Repair -

### Why is it important to maintain and repair my building?

#### What causes older buildings to decay?

Weather and its effects are the fundamental cause of decay, leading to problems such as damp, mould, woodworm and fungi. Inappropriate repairs and lack of maintenance can accelerate decay to building fabric.

#### What is maintenance?

Maintenance is routine work needed to keep the fabric of a building in good order. Carrying out basic and regular maintenance avoids or postpones the need for expensive repair work. It is the most practical and economic way of looking after older buildings, assuring their long-term survival. All areas of a building should be inspected once a year and maintenance undertaken if needed.

#### What is a repair?

Repair is work which fixes defects caused by decay, damage or use of a building. It is important to understand what the cause of the defect is so that the issue can be prevented from reoccurring, either through the design of the repair or future maintenance.

Repairs should be the minimum which is needed in order to resolve the problem and avoid the unnecessary replacement of historic fabric. Repairs should be undertaken on a like-for-like basis using the same materials and techniques used in the existing building. The exception to this is if the defect has been caused by a previous, inappropriate repair. Wherever possible repairs should be reversible.

Approval may be required for some repairs, especially where they are not like-for-like. It is advisable to check with your local planning authority before starting work.



*All older buildings in the conservation area require regular maintenance including the medieval St Margaret's Church*

## Maintenance and Repair -

### Why is it important to maintain and repair my building?

#### Rainwater Goods

Gutters and drainpipes can easily become blocked with leaves and other debris and can also be damaged by water freezing inside them causing cracks and breakage. The best time to inspect rainwater goods is during or after heavy rain as you will easily see any problem areas. This can be done from ground level with the help of a pair of binoculars.

Gutters and drains should be regularly cleared of debris and any blockages and drainpipes cleared to allow water to flow away from the building. This includes valley and parapet gutters.

Repairs should be made to rainwater goods to prevent damage to the building fabric and water ingress into the building.



*Broken gutters prevent water flowing away from a building.*

#### Roofs

Not maintaining or undertaking repairs to the roof of a building can cause problems elsewhere within the structure.

Roof coverings should be inspected regularly to ensure they are intact, if the roof is visible from the ground this can be done with the help of binoculars. For flat roofs there is likely to be access on to them for inspection, this may also be the case for roofs with parapets and valleys.

Tiles can be dislodged in heavy winds, in particular ridge tiles. Missing or slipped tiles should be reinstated as soon as possible and damage to other roof coverings appropriately repaired to avoid water ingress and damage to the roof structure below.

Damp on ceilings within the building may also indicate there is a problem at roof level, but water can track through the building so this may not show exactly where the damaged area is.

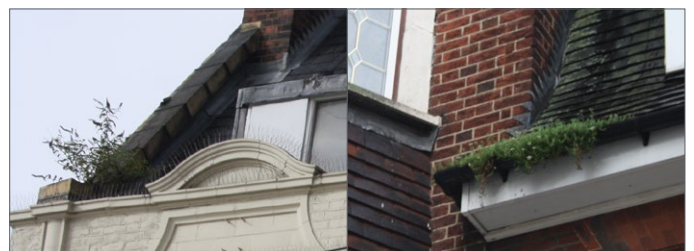


*Slipped and missing tiles need to be replaced to prevent water ingress and damage to the roof structure*

#### Foliage Growth

Seeds can easily be blown into gutters and other crevices of buildings and can grow even in small amounts of silt or soil. Plant roots can cause extensive damage to buildings. They can damage masonry, affecting a building structurally and cause water ingress by damaging roof coverings or blocking rainwater goods.

It is important to clear any foliage or vegetation growth as soon as it is identified to prevent problems escalating. Ensure roots are removed as well as the plant itself.



*Foliage growth causes damage to building fabric*



## Maintenance and Repair -

### Why is it important to maintain and repair my building?

#### Abutments and Chimneys

Where different parts of buildings or neighbouring buildings join together, where they abut, are some of the most vulnerable to decay. This includes where dormer windows and chimneys join roofs. Joins are often formed by lead flashings or mortar fillets. Inspecting these joins is important to check they are not missing or damaged. Repairs should be undertaken swiftly to prevent water ingress and damage to wall and roof fabric.

If chimneys are in use these should be swept regularly for safety reasons. If not in use, then a ventilated cap should be installed to reduce water ingress.

#### Walls and Wall Coverings

Historic buildings have solid masonry walls, usually brick or stone, held together with lime-based mortars. These materials allow water in and out of them, allowing the building to 'breathe'. Water penetrates the brickwork when it rains and evaporates away with the help of sun and wind. Inside the building, good ventilation also helps moisture evaporate, preventing condensation and damp. Opening windows improves ventilation and you should also avoid blocking airbricks and ventilation grilles.

The pointing between bricks is sacrificial and walls will need to be repointed periodically. It is important that lime-based mortar is used as the use of cement-based mortars will cause damage to the brickwork.

If walls are painted or rendered, it is also important that only lime-based products are used for repainting or re-rendering as cement-based products will trap moisture in the building and damage its structure.

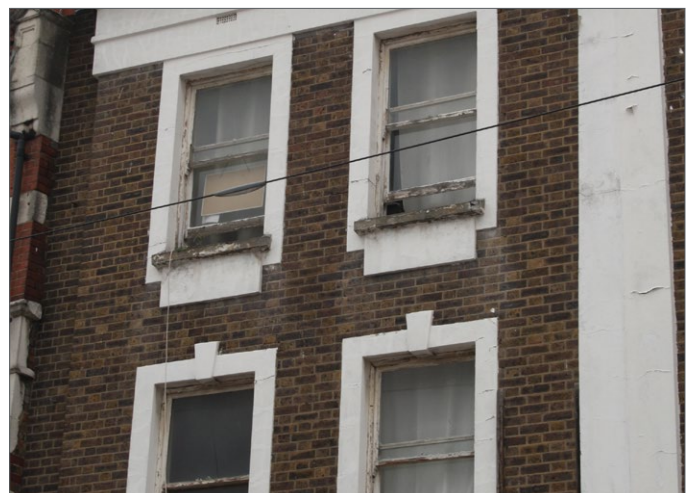
#### Windows and Doors

Historic windows and doors contribute to why a building is special and should be retained and looked after. Most will outlive their modern counterparts if they are properly maintained. Most historic windows will be timber-framed, although some may be metal.

Most historic shopfronts will also be made from timber.

Repainting timber windows, doors and other external timberwork will help prevent rot and reduce water ingress into the building. Repainting metal windows will help prevent rust. The condition of paintwork should be checked regularly.

Windows may become difficult to open. This is often caused by the built up of paint layers over the years. If this happens excess paint layers should be sanded away before repainting. Damp weather can also cause window to expand and become difficult to open. If this happens, wait until the timber is dry, then sand down the affected area before repainting.



*It is important to repair damaged windows and undertake regular maintenance such as repainting.*

#### STAY SAFE

Remember to think about your own and others safety when undertaking any maintenance or repair work to your building.

Make sure you always use the correct equipment for the work and have the necessary safety equipment.



## Making changes to my building

### What does designation mean and how does it affect me?

Conservation area designation means that changes to the external appearance of buildings may require planning permission. This is to protect the area against changes which may harm its special interest.

Permitted Development Rights, that is works which can be undertaken without the need to gain planning permission, are different in a conservation area and means that more types of work require approval from the local planning authority.

The local authority can choose to extend the types of work which need approval using an Article 4 Direction. Currently there is one Article 4 Direction in place in Barking that means planning permission is needed to change a dwelling house into a house in multiple occupation (HMO).

### What approval do I need if I want to change my building?

There are different types of approval needed from the local planning authority depending on the type of work or change proposed and the designated status of the building.

#### Planning Permission

The main approval is planning permission and will often be needed alongside other types of approval. Non-listed buildings in the conservation area need planning permission for the following:

- The total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures
- Extensions
- New openings in external elevations and roofs (including skylights and dormer windows)
- Changes to the external cladding of a building
- Aerials and satellite dishes visible from the street;
- Advertisements and other commercial signage (Advertising Consent may also be required)
- Changing the use of a building
- Works to trees

Other types of change to the exterior of non-listed buildings may also need planning permission, it is advisable to check with the local planning authority to confirm whether approval is needed.

#### Listed Building Consent

This type of approval is needed for all works which will affect the character of a listed building, including alteration of building fabric. This includes both external and internal works as the whole of the building is included in the designation. It is advised that any work or changes being planned to

a listed building are discussed with the local planning authority prior to an application being submitted to ensure that the proposals are appropriate. Planning permission will also be needed if the works will affect the exterior of the building.

#### Advertising Consent

This type of approval is needed when changes are proposed to retail signage or other advertising or if new advertising or signage is planned. Planning permission will also be needed for this type of work in the conservation area.

#### Building Control

This type of approval is required to ensure that any building work undertaken meets the building regulations minimum standards for things like health and safety, energy conservation and equal access. There are different types of application, depending on the work and it is important to get the correct approval. More information can be found here: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/building-control>.

## Making changes to my building

### PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE SERVICE

The local authority has a dedicated pre-application advice service through which advice is given on proposals, whether they are acceptable and how they could be amended to ensure approval.

Using this service can also speed up the approval process. Information about the service can be found here: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/make-a-planning-application>.



### What happens if I do not get approval for my changes?

It is very important to get all the correct approvals before beginning any work to your property as there are legal penalties for undertaking unauthorised work.

Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence and can result in an unlimited fine or up to two-year prison sentence.

The same penalties apply for demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area without first gaining planning permission.

If work is undertaken that is harmful to the historic environment is without the necessary consents (i.e. listed building consent and / or planning permission), the local authority can issue an enforcement notice. This notice requires the unlawful works to be reversed, at the expense of the owner. Failure to comply with an enforcement notice is an offence and can result in an unlimited fine. There is the option to appeal against an enforcement notice.



*Barking Town Hall, a locally listed building and the civic heart of the town*

### PLANNING PORTAL

All the types of approval described need to be applied for through the Planning Portal (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>) which also has extensive advice and guidance on the application processes. Once submitted, applications are transferred to the relevant local planning authority for a decision.



## What can I do to enhance the conservation area?

There are many changes you can make to your building which will enhance the conservation area, some of the most effective are identified here. Remember to make sure you check with the local planning authority whether planning permission is needed before making changes to your building.

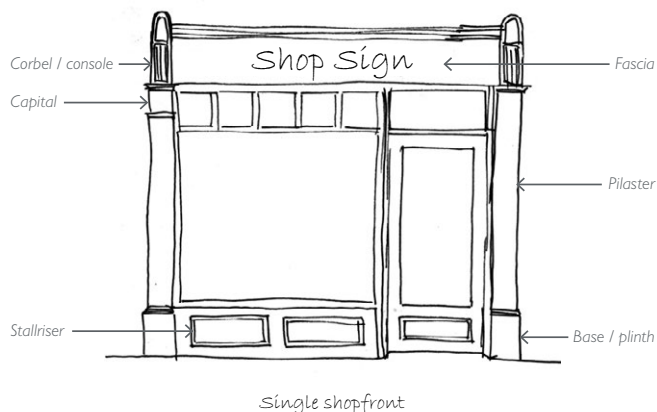
### Shopfronts and Signage

Reinstatement of traditional-style shopfronts is one of the main opportunities to enhance the conservation area. Even small changes can make a big difference. There is detailed guidance in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and planning permission and advertising consent will be required for most work to shopfronts.

A shopfront is part of a building as a whole, rather than being a separate entity. Replacement shopfronts (either whole or in part) need to take account of the period and style of the building they are within and use traditional components where appropriate. Painted timber and glazing are the most appropriate materials for shopfronts, including signage.

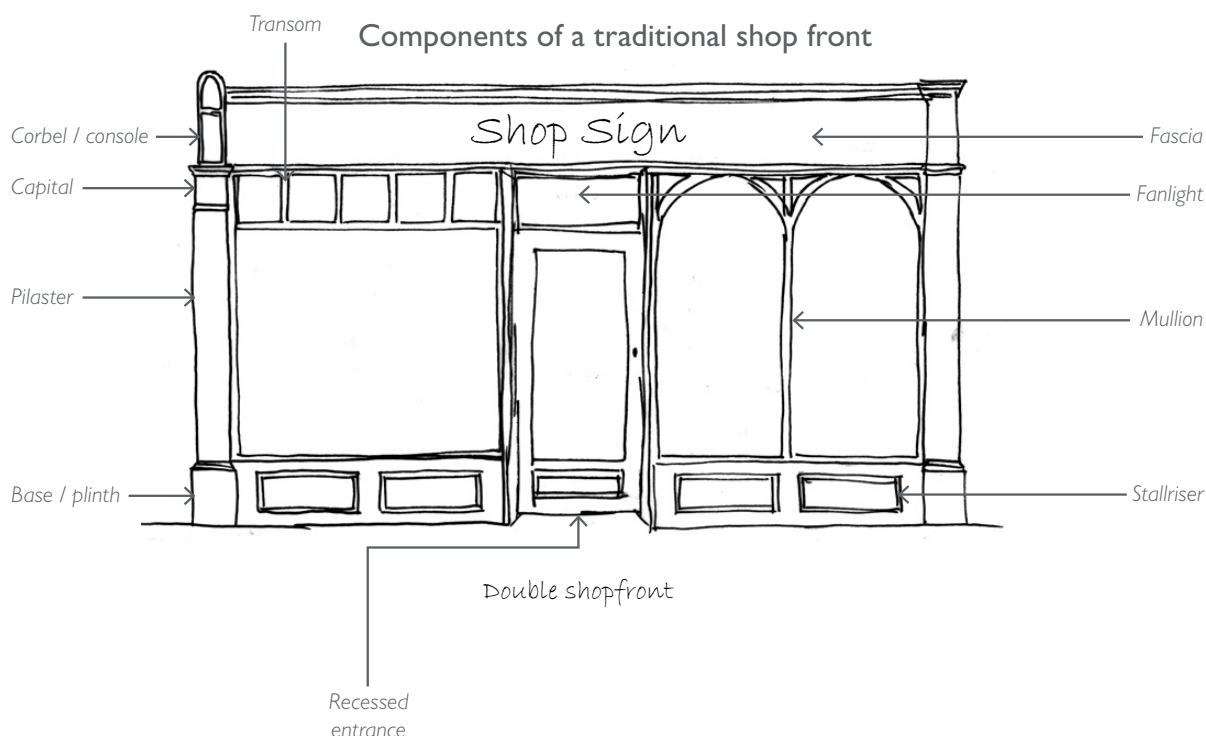
Surviving historic shopfronts features should be maintained and kept in a good state of repair and reinstatement of lost historic features is desirable. Where a shop extends across more than one unit, the vertical division between the buildings could be reinstated if this has been lost.

### Components of a traditional shop front



Signage should complement the design of the shopfront and building, including colour palettes and lettering style. The proportions and appearance of fascia signage are particularly important, these should not be oversized or conceal other parts of the building. Signage should be externally, rather than internally, illuminated, and any canopies should be retractable and positioned so as not to obscure

### Components of a traditional shop front



## What can I do to enhance the conservation area?

historic features.

### Windows

If your building retains its original windows, then these should be maintained and kept in a good state of repair. However, if the original windows have been replaced with plastic-framed windows then you could help enhance the conservation area by returning them back to the original style and material.

White-painted timber is likely to be the most appropriate materiality for windows with the proportions and type of window (sash or casement) being dependant on the age and style of individual buildings. In some limited circumstances metal windows may be appropriate to replicate early to



*White painted timber-framed sash windows in the conservation area*

### Rainwater Goods

If your building retains its original metal gutters and drainpipes, then these should be maintained and kept in a good state of repair. However, if the originals have been replaced with plastic versions then you could help enhance the conservation area by returning them back to the original material. Drainage goods would have historically been painted cast iron; however other metals may also be appropriate.

### Satellite Dishes and External Wiring

Removal of redundant satellite dishes and external wiring is an easy way to enhance the conservation area. If still in use, relocating these features to more discrete locations could be considered, for example re-routing wiring internally and moving satellite dishes to rear walls, rear roof slopes or behind parapet walls. When considering new external additions such as these, choose to locate these discretely and remember that planning permission



*Satellite dishes on front elevations detract from the conservation area and should be relocated to more discrete locations*

### Pigeon Deterrents

Removal of old and dilapidated pigeon deterrents such as netting and spikes will enhance the conservation area. Pigeon deterrents such as netting and spikes are commonly used, however these are not always appropriate in the conservation area and can be cruel for the birds and entangle other wildlife. Within the conservation area post and wire solutions are most appropriate as they are less visible than spikes or netting. Physical interventions can only work effectively if they are properly installed and maintained. It is recommended that you discuss with your pest control advisor including an initial process of eradication and solutions for long-term abatement.

## Where can I find more information?

More information and guidance related to the conservation area can be found in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/conservation-areas-and-listed-buildings>

More detailed information about maintenance and repair of historic buildings is available from Historic England and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/>

SPAB: <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice>

The Victorian Society: <https://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/>

The Twentieth Century Society: <https://c20society.org.uk/>

For information about the local authority's pre-application advice service visit, building control and submitting a planning application visit <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control>

### Contact Details

Barking and Dagenham Council (Be First Regeneration Ltd)

Planning, 9th floor, Maritime House, 1 Linton Rd, Barking, IG11 8HG

Email: [planning@befirst.london](mailto:planning@befirst.london)

Telephone: 020 33 720 707

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