

# Town Hall Conservation Area (Warrington)

## Purpose of this Leaflet

This leaflet is one of 14 which gives advice to all property owners in the Borough's 17 Conservation Areas (in the settlements of Warrington, Lymm, Grappenhall, Walton, Thelwall, Culcheth and Stockton Heath) about the planning controls which are used to protect and enhance their character and appearance.

Copies of this leaflet are available for all of these settlements, with a brief description of the area and a map to indicate the Conservation Areas boundaries and the relevant year of designation/extension. In the case of Warrington individual leaflets are available for each of its 7 Conservation Areas to assist interpretation of their boundaries.

The Thelwall leaflet also gives advice to property owners who live in the special Article 4 Direction Area about additional controls.

## Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are defined as: *areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance [Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990].*

It is the quality and interest of these areas, their historic layout, hard and soft landscaping, vistas along streets and thoroughfares, and, the quality, scale and detailing of their individual buildings, groups of buildings and spaces between them, which is of prime consideration in identifying them as Conservation Areas.

Conservation Area designation is a means of recognising all these factors and ensuring that conservation policy addresses the quality of the townscape in its broadest sense as well as the protection of individual buildings.

## Town Hall Conservation Area

The Town Hall is considered to be special in this way and have been designated as a Conservation Area, to help the Council and the Community to protect its character.

It was **designated** in 1972.

*(See Map on back page.)*

## Character and Appearance

The central focus of the Town Hall conservation area is the former town hall, a fine Grade I listed Georgian town house designed by Gibb in 1750 and set in parkland behind fine wrought iron gates.

The conservation area encompasses the Gibb's building and its two annex buildings to the east and west; Bank Park itself; and a number of buildings adjacent to and in front of the hall along Sankey Street.

The whole area has important townscape qualities, and the park itself is an unusual feature for an industrial town providing a fine setting for the hall with mature elm and plane trees along its length.

The area contains a number of Grade II listed 18th and 19th century buildings.

When viewed from Winmarleigh Street and Springfield Street the hall in its parkland setting and Bank House in its small scale urban setting, act as terminal features to these street axis. The plan forms in both these cases are symmetrical.

The plan form for Sankey Street is asymmetrical. The main elements are a gentle curve in the street which is pinched at Bank House, the building being forward of the general street line, and being emphasised by the setting back of the adjacent Georgian building. The visual sequence moving east is the group of buildings and space which is asymmetrical in form, with Sankey Street and Bank House being important elements. Moving forward, Bank House acts as a pinch point and as an enclosing element, beyond this point the plan form opens to the hall in its parkland setting.

*(Source : Designation Report)*

## Controls Over Development

Now it is designated as a Conservation Area the Council has the following additional planning powers to control certain types of development.

**New Development.** In considering planning applications for new commercial and residential development, which requires planning consent within Conservation Areas, the Council should pay **special attention** to carefully considering the appropriateness of the proposal and details such as materials, colour, height, proportion, design and siting, to seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Applications for new development in Conservation Areas therefore normally need to be submitted as '**Full Applications**' to enable detailed assessment of proposals, i.e. with full plans, elevations and written details. Often drawings showing the relationship between the proposed development and its surroundings will also be required.

In addition development proposals which are outside a Conservation Area but which would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area, will also be carefully considered in the light of this contextual relationship.

**Commercial Uses.** Planning permission is required for any material alteration to the exterior of such buildings and within conservation areas particular emphasis is placed upon the need to ensure that the effect upon the fabric and appearance of the building is minimised.

**Alterations to Existing Houses.** Normally within certain limits relating to volume, height and proximity to boundaries, it is possible to extend or alter residential properties, other than flats, without planning permission. These rights are known as permitted development rights.

Within Conservation Areas however development rights are more limited and certain development that would normally be permitted development require planning permission. Thus the following types of development, normally classed as permitted development, require planning permission within Conservation Areas, so that the impact of the proposed changes can be properly assessed:-

- Enlargement, improvement or alteration of a dwelling which would **increase the original cubic content** by more than 50 cubic metres or 10%, whichever is the greater, or any development which is over 115 cubic metres.
- Building, altering or improving an **outbuilding** over 10 cubic metres.
- The **cladding** of any part of the exterior with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Any alteration to the **roof** resulting in a material alteration to its shape.
- Certain **satellite** and **telecommunications antenna** and **services**, as detailed below under telecommunications.

**Demolition.** Within a Conservation Area certain types of demolition come under planning controls as a result of designation, and require a special type of consent known as **Conservation Area Consent**, which also involves the submission of details of the replacement building or proposed treatment of the cleared site after demolition.

This gives the Council the opportunity to assess both the loss of the building and its contribution to the Conservation Area, as well as the impact of any new building or site treatment after demolition.

The following types of demolition require Conservation Area Consent:-

- The **total** or **substantial** destruction of a **building**, including façade retention schemes (depending on their extent).
- The demolition of **part of a building** if the cubic area to be demolished is 115 cubic metres or more.
- The demolition of a **gate, wall, fence, or other means of enclosure** over 1 metre high fronting a highway, waterway or open space (or a wall over 2 metres elsewhere).

**Telecommunications.** The following also need planning permission within a Conservation Area:

- Installation of a **satellite antenna** on any building or structure, or within its curtilage, of more than 90cm in any dimension.
- An **antenna** over 15 metres high.
- Installation of a **satellite antenna** exceeding the highest part of the roof, or located on a chimney, or on a wall or roofslope fronting a highway or footway.
- Installation of a **satellite antenna** where there is already a dish on the building or structure.
- **Radio housing** – over 2 cubic metres in volume.
- Overground **telecommunications lines and cables.**

**Advertisements and Signs.** Many signs, whether inside or outside a Conservation Area, need Advertisement Consent, but within a Conservation Area **careful consideration** will particularly be given to sympathetic lighting and design.

In addition Conservation Area designation also extends controls to cover the following: a tethered balloon, illuminated signs on business premises, flags, and, hoardings surrounding building sites, as well as advertisements without deemed consent.

**Trees.** Anyone wishing to fell, top, lop or uproot a tree in a Conservation Area must give six weeks notice to the Council of their intention to carry out such works.

*(Source : Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended)*

**Listed Buildings.** Consent known as Listed Building Consent is needed for alteration, extension or demolition of a Listed Building whether it is inside or outside a Conservation Area.

Furthermore most works to a Listed Building to alter, improve or enlarge it internally or externally, require Listed Building Consent, as do any works within or to its curtilage.

The guidance in this leaflet does not apply to Listed Buildings and therefore you should seek advice if you want to alter such buildings in any way. A leaflet on the subject of consent and works to Listed Buildings will be produced later in the year 2001.

## Which Properties and Areas are Affected

The map on the back page indicates the properties and areas here which are included within the Conservation Area.

This boundary has been drawn to include all those buildings and areas which contribute to the historic and architectural character of this area.

## How Does the Council Reach its Decision On Applications?

Within Conservation Areas the Council advertises planning applications which it considers will affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This gives interested parties an opportunity to comment on the proposals and ensures greater community involvement in potential changes.

In deciding whether to grant permission in Conservation Areas, the Council will consider each case against its policies, as set out in the consolidated version of the unadopted Borough Local Plan and as set out in Central Government guidance on conservation. However it will also take account of the circumstances of the building concerned, such as whether it has been altered in the past and whether it is in a particularly sensitive part of the Conservation Area.

Some applications are reported to the Development Control Committee for a decision, but most follow the delegated route, and this is explained in a leaflet entitled '**What Happens To Your Planning Application**' available at reception on the 2nd floor of New Town House.

## How to Apply for Permission or Consent

Prior to submitting an application property owners in Conservation Areas wishing to carry out alterations to their property are encouraged to discuss their proposals with a Development Control Officer, who may request preliminary details and confer with the Conservation Officer so as to advise on the appropriateness of the proposed works and their design, materials and finishes.

Copies of application forms and details of fees can then be obtained from the Development Control Section at the address given below, and then submitted together with the necessary location plan and elevational and block plans required.

The Council aims to decide more than 80% of all applications in 8 weeks and during that time several processes take place, as shown in the diagram in the leaflet noted above.

This conservation area leaflet should not be relied upon for a full determination of whether consent is required, and you should write, sending details of the proposed works, so that a definitive answer can be given, to :

**Development Control Section, Planning Division,  
Environment & Regeneration Department,  
Warrington Borough Council  
New Town House, Buttermarket Street  
Warrington WA1 2NH.**

## Appraisals

Since becoming a Unitary Authority Warrington Borough Council has resolved to carry out a programme of Conservation Area reappraisals, over the next 5 years.

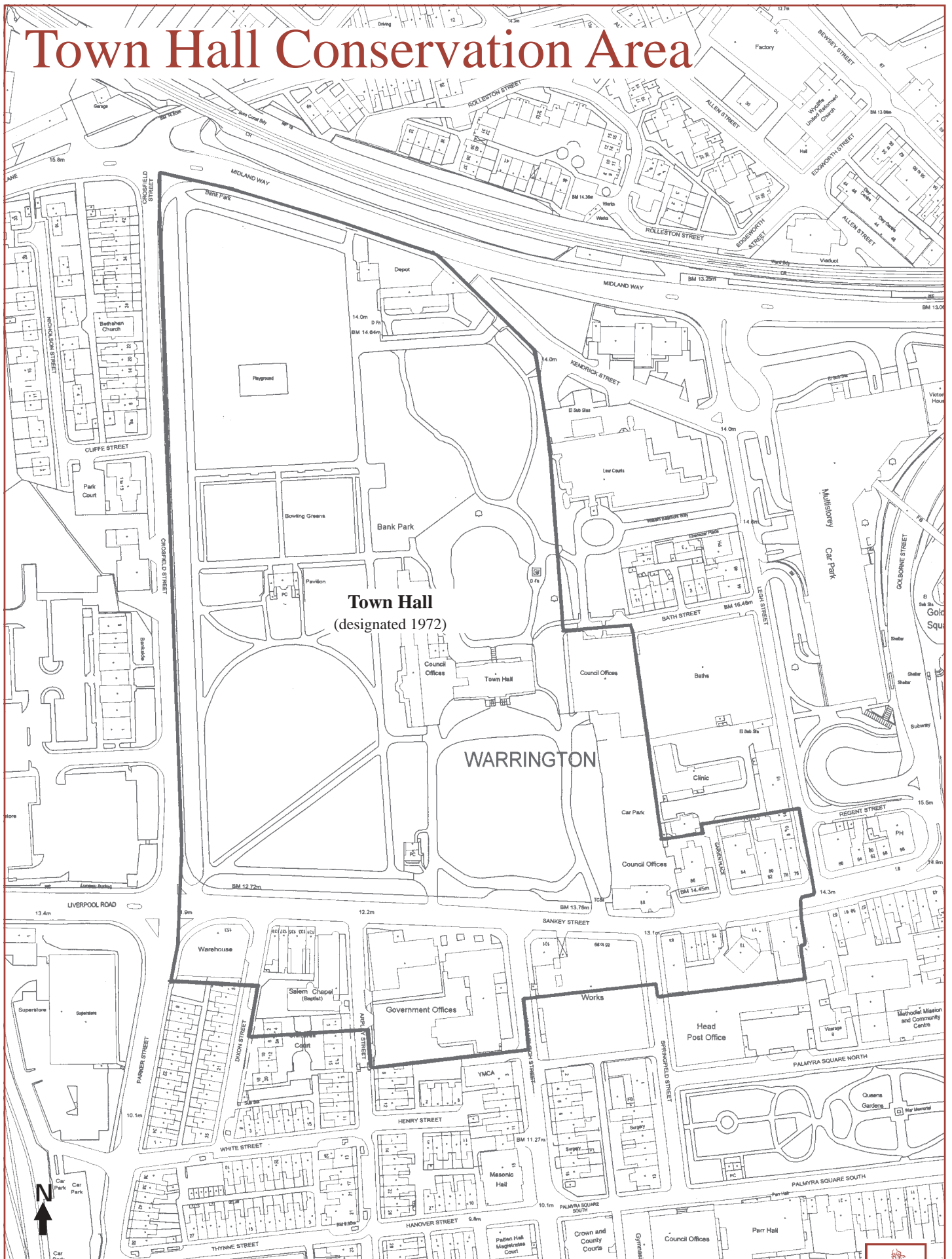
These will re-evaluate the importance of each area and enable a reassessment of their special qualities. They will also help to determine if they should be modified or if policies and practices need to be revised.

Property owners and Parish Councils will be consulted and notified at the time of such appraisals, in due course.

*The information contained in this leaflet is correct at the date shown at the foot of the first page.*

*The map is provided solely to indicate the boundary of the Conservation Areas at the date of designation and does not therefore reflect subsequent development and property boundary changes.*

# Town Hall Conservation Area



**Town Hall**  
(designated 1972)

**WARRINGTON**

This map is provided solely to indicate the boundary of the Conservation area at the date of designation and the boundary does not therefore reflect subsequent development or property boundary changes.

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**WARRINGTON**  
**BOURGH**  
**COUNCIL**