

Wargrave

Conservation Area



Wargrave Conservation Area was designated on the 9th June 1971. Wokingham District Council has now reconsidered its boundary. This leaflet explains the implications of this review and what the designation means for residents and property owners within the Conservation Area.

Conservation in Wokingham District

Wokingham District Council wishes to preserve and enhance those parts of the District that are of special architectural or historic interest; certain areas such as Wargrave, are worthy of special protection and are therefore designated as conservation areas.

What is a conservation area?

The character of conservation areas can vary considerably, but they are normally areas with a strong historic content centred on a concentration of listed buildings. All the elements of the area are important in creating the character of the conservation area including street patterns, open spaces, trees, and individual or groups of buildings of historic or architectural interest.

The designation of a conservation area means that the planning authority can exercise stronger control over development in the location so that it's special character can be protected and enhanced.

Once a conservation area has been designated it is a duty of the local authority to formulate and publish positive proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area.

As part of its duty to positively enhance the conservation area, Wokingham District Council are preparing a scheme of enhancement for the High Street. A public consultation exercise will be carried out in Spring 1993, and the work should take place in Winter of 1993/94.



The History of Wargrave

The village of Wargrave has a rich and varied history; this leaflet can only contain a brief explanation of the development of the village. For further information 'The Book of Wargrave', (1986) edited by Judith Stephenson, Rosemary Gray and Sue Griffiths, is an excellent reference.

Early development in the Village

Wargrave developed as a settlement about AD 900 at the confluence of the Thames and Loddon Rivers, in a relatively flat area on the lower slopes of the wooded valley.

The earliest historical reference to Wargrave is in the Domesday Book (1086), where the village is referred to as 'Weregrave' having a population of 250 - 300 people. In 1218 the Bishop of Winchester was granted the right to hold a market by Henry III, but this did not last and there is no mention of it after the 13th century. Attempts were made to develop the village into a town in 1225, but the village remained a small and isolated rural settlement until the eighteenth century.

The mediaeval settlement of Wargrave is likely to have developed around the church, with a manor house and to the east a village green and pond. Other early buildings are sited on the High Street, the main north-south route through the village. Wargrave Court, which is of 15th century origin with 18th and 19th century extensions, is almost certainly the early manor house.

The Manor

The primary function of Wargrave appears to have been as a base for hunting and fishing past-times of the nobility. The Manor of Wargrave has been the focus of the historic activity in the village, and has seen a succession of famous owners. It is suggested that Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, owned the manor before 1066. The manor remained a royal possession until 1189 when Richard the Lionheart sold the manor to Godfrey de Lucy, the Bishop of Winchester. When Richard returned from the third crusade he seized the manor back: the bishop was then out of favour. Five years later King John again sold the manor to the bishop. Henry VIII held the manor for a short time around 1529, after the disgrace of Cardinal Wolsey.



Wargrave Manor was originally known as Wargrave Hill, built between 1780 - 90 by Joseph Hill, greatnephew of Sir Joseph Jekyll (1662-1737). The estate passed to Joseph Jekyll (1753-1838) grandfather of Gertrude Jekyll, the famous artist and gardener, who moved to Wargrave Hill in June 1868 with her parents, elder sister and four brothers. It is reputed that she re-designed the garden, and it is certain that she was responsible for redecoration of the house at that time.

St. Mary's Church

The oldest building fragment in Wargrave today is found in the Church of St Mary, a late 12th or early 13th century Norman doorway with collonettes and zig-zag ornament. It was revealed in the north wall after the fire of 1914 when most of the church was destroyed and later rebuilt. However, the tower dates from the first half of the 17th century, and the font, which was once put out in the churchyard, is 15th century.

Later Development of the Village

The late eighteenth century witnessed a sudden growth in population, as the village and the Thames Valley became a favoured area for countryside living by high society bent on rural pleasure.

Many of the larger houses in the village were built during the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods, when the river became the focus of this summer resort and commercial traffic on the Thames declined.

On the 1st October 1900 the Henley Branch of the Great Western Railway opened with a station at Wargrave, which allowed the village to expand further and become a residential village with no industries of note.

Why was Wargrave designated as a Conservation Area, and why does the boundary need to be revised?

The plan on the fold-out page shows the extent of the Conservation area, as revised. This updates the original boundary designated 21 years ago. The boundary of the conservation area has been revised to take account of modern development which cuts across the property boundaries. The new boundary has been drawn tightly around the significant historic area of Wargrave. However, it has been extended to the north to include an attractive area by the river and to the south west to include the meadow near the boat club. It was considered this warranted the special protection of the conservation area.

Wargrave Conservation Area was designated to protect the special character that is unique to the village; it has not only architectural merit but significant historical value also.

The unique character of Wargrave is made up of various distinct elements, these include the High Street which is dominated by the narrow road and its wide variety of building styles tightly packed to create an intimate space. This is particularly evident at the junction of Church Street and High Street, the focus of the village. The area around the Church has a special character created by the Lutyens War Memorial, the open grassed area with its specimen trees, and criss-crossing paths. Although the river is a major factor in the history of the village, it has little

public access and is hardly visible to those passing through, yet it still makes an important contribution to the conservation area. The wooded slopes of the valley characterise the northern end of the conservation area. The grounds of Wargrave Manor extend through this area.

The dominant materials are traditional local Berkshire orangey-red brick and clay tiles. There are also a number of rendered buildings, for example, the Manor; this became fashionable in the early 1800's.

What does designation of a conservation area mean?

Designation of a conservation area allows additional controls on development that do not apply elsewhere.

Control of demolition - Buildings within the conservation area cannot be demolished without the consent of the planning authority.

Control of works to trees - Apart from those trees already protected by Tree Preservation Orders, no works can be carried out on trees, over 75mm in diameter, within the conservation area without notice to the planning authority six weeks prior to the work being carried out.

Advertisements - A high standard of control on the display of adverts is in force. New advertising must be in keeping with the character of the area.

Local Plan Policies - Additional control is also applied through the local plan policies. These state that all the features making up the character of the conservation area will be preserved and enhanced. The design of new development within the area, must be sympathetic, and in keeping with the existing scale and character, paying special regard to the setting of listed buildings.

Listed Buildings - Conservation areas usually contain a number of listed buildings. These are buildings that because of their special architectural or historical importance are placed on a statutory nationally recognised list. Listed Building Consent is required to alter or demolish a listed building. Wargrave contains a concentration of 35 listed buildings and structures.



Improvements to the Conservation Area

What can owners/occupiers of buildings within the conservation area do, to help preserve and enhance it?

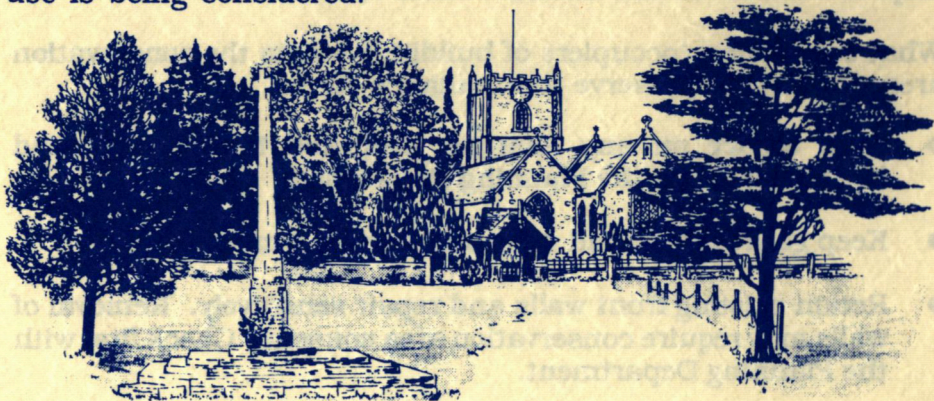
- **Seek advice on any changes proposed to buildings and boundaries from the Planning Department.**
- **Keep gardens tidy and trees and shrubs trimmed.**
- **Retain existing front walls and repair sensitively. Removal of walls may require conservation area consent. Check first with the Planning Department.**
- **Keep buildings in good repair including regular painting of exterior woodwork and rendering.**
- **Keep out-buildings in good repair. Seek advice from the Planning Department on the erection of new out-buildings; for example sheds, garages, greenhouses, conservatories; these may require planning consent or listed building consent.**

Wokingham District Council may, by means of a low interest loan, contribute towards the expenses of repairing or maintaining a listed building or building of local or historic interest; these loans are not available for regular maintenance works. If you would like further information please contact the Planning Department.

Works to Listed Buildings - It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building. This would include alterations or extensions, full or partial demolition of the building. It is, therefore, advisable to consult the Planning Department before carrying out either internal or external work.

To authorise works to listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is required, this is obtained from Wokingham District Council's Planning Department.

Local Plan Policies - Just as conservation areas are protected by policies in the local plan, so are listed buildings, these seek to control the appropriate use of listed buildings, if a change of use is being considered.



Further information is available from:
PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION SECTION
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1WR

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