Implications of the ACA designation

ACA designation means that the carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure is exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the area. This is in addition to the requirement that for works to be exempted, they must be consistent with the appearance of the structure itself and neighbouring structures.

ACA status is not intended to prevent change but to protect, manage and enhance the special character of the area. Restoration and repair of buildings within the ACA should follow best conservation practice. A high standard of design is encouraged for new and infill development.

Example of works that might alter the character of the ACA & require planning permission

- Erecting or altering shopfronts and signage
- Changing the design, materials and finish of windows, doors and cills
- Changing the finish of external walls
- Installing decorative lights
- Changing the roof profile
- Changing roofing material
- Removing or altering chimneys
- Adding satellites, antennae, roof lights or dormers
- Erecting an extension
- Changing the boundary treatment

This is not a complete list and is included for guidance purpose only. It is recommended that advice is sought in advance on whether or not planning permission is required.

Where can I get more information?

This leaflet only provides a summary on the implications of ACA designation.

Policy on development within the ACA is contained in chapter 7 of the Galway City Development Plan 2005-2011. This can be viewed on our website and is available for inspection or purchase at the City Hall.

The Planning Section is available to advise on good conservation practice and development proposals. Information is also available on

- Traditional Building Skills
- The DoEHLG Conservation Guidelines
- Protected Structures Guidelines
- Grants / incentives available

For further information and advice please contact:

The Planning Section
Galway City Council
City Hall
College Road
Galway

Tel: 091 - 536599
Email: planning@galwaycity.ie
Website: www.galwaycity.ie
What is an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)?

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscapes, taking account of building lines and heights, that is either of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in its own right or which contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

Galway City Council has a duty, under planning law, to protect and enhance the built heritage of the city. A measure to achieve this is through the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas.

The City Core Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

The City Core is one of seven ACAs designated in the Galway City Development Plan 2005-2011.

The city core is the most important area of built heritage in Galway. It contains most of the structures included in the Record of Protected Structures. The medieval core of Galway is a mix of streetscape and buildings of many periods. The layout and the scale of the streets reflect the medieval street pattern. ACA status is beneficial in ensuring the area’s character is enhanced and protected.

Protected Structures within the ACA

Protected structures and proposed protected structures within the ACA are subject to additional protection.

To encourage the restoration of protected structures the Council will not apply development contributions that might normally apply to the development if the proposal involves appropriate conservation works. The Council will also consider a change of use of a protected structure to a use appropriate to the conservation of the building. DoEHLG conservation grants, administered by the Council are also available for conservation works to protected structures. Owners and occupiers of protected structures should consult separate guidelines available.

The next step will be the preparation of an ACA Management Plan

The preparation of an ACA Management Plan for the streetscape will involve extensive public consultation.

The Management Plan will set out design requirements for restoration, repair, new and infill development and include a strategy for works in the public domain to enhance the character of the area. Opportunities will also be investigated to attract funding for enhancement works within the ACA.