



## **What it means if your house is covered by an Article 4 Direction**

The aim of an Article 4 Direction is to encourage the retention of the high quality features of historic buildings within the Durham (City Centre) Conservation Area and to enhance the overall group character of the built environment.

'Like for like' repairs and replacement of original architectural features will be encouraged, as will the removal of previous unsympathetic changes to historic buildings and the reinstatement of authentic features.

The Article 4 Direction removes permitted development rights for certain types of alterations and means that formal Planning Permission will be required for those types of works listed in the Order. This gives the Council the opportunity to influence the design quality and materials of any proposed alterations. The appropriate planning fee still needs to be paid where an application for Planning Permission is required as a result of an Article 4 Direction. The application process normally takes 6-8 weeks, and permission should obviously be secured before work commences. The direction does not affect any alterations which have already been undertaken it only controls new works.

The following summary of commonly proposed alterations indicates the general approach the Design and Conservation Team is likely to take when assessing planning applications within the Durham (City Centre) Conservation Area. These apply to unlisted buildings covered by an Article 4 Direction, listed buildings have additional planning controls over internal and external alterations. Residents are encouraged to use the County Council Householder Pre-application Enquiry Service for detailed advice on specific works to properties:

### **Alterations to Elevations**

Material alterations to elevations fronting an adopted highway would require formal Planning Permission from the County Council. Applications for porches, removal of architectural details, extensions and other works materially affecting the external appearance of the building, including satellite dishes, will be treated on their individual merits. The Direction is not meant to cover very minor alterations such as burglar alarms, external cabling etc.

### **Roofs**

A change of roof material will require Planning Permission under the Article 4 Direction. If a roof is in a terrace or a group of historic buildings where natural slates dominate, only re-roofing in natural slate would normally be supported. Where a roof is prominent, man-made slates for example would not be considered acceptable as an alternative to natural slate, or concrete tiles in place of clay tiles for example. As a general principle the retention of natural roofing materials is expected within the conservation area. Chimneys are important features within the historic roofscape particularly in terraced groups. Planning Permission is required for the removal or shortening of chimneys under the Direction, and retention of these features will be promoted. Permitted rights to erect solar panels have not been affected by the 2016 Article 4 Direction and can in most cases be added without any need for formal Planning Permission.

### **Rooflights and dormers**

Only conservation style roof lights are likely to be supported within the conservation area, and the number of rooflights will also be taken into account to minimise visual clutter. Applications for dormer windows will be supported only if they traditionally existed throughout a particular group of buildings or are in keeping with the period and character of the particular building. The position, scale, bulk and design of a dormer should reflect that which previously existed or prevailed in the area, and be appropriate to the buildings character.

### **Doors and Windows**

The original period design of doors and windows contribute greatly to the character of the individual historic buildings and the conservation area as a whole and they should be retained where possible. Replacements of surviving original timber windows and doors should only be proposed if they are beyond viable economic repair. Applications for replacement doors and windows will only be supported provided they are of appropriate materials, style and design to the character and appearance of the building. Replacements in aluminium, in plastic, or in designs other than that which originally existed on principal elevations, are unlikely to be granted permission, other than in exceptional circumstances.

### **Painting Facades and Rendering**

Good quality brick and stone are used throughout the conservation area and it is important that they should remain exposed. Planning applications for the exterior painting of brickwork or stone in areas covered by the Direction are unlikely to be supported. However where a facade has already been painted, planning permission would not be required for repainting, or a change of colour, unless it significantly alters the appearance. Applying textured paint or render in areas where brick prevails would materially change the character and appearance of the property and can be harmful to the street scene as such works of this nature would not normally receive support.

### **Hardstandings and Curtilage Walls**

It is recognised that residents will wish to provide space for vehicles on their sites wherever possible. However, some control is necessary to prevent cars from dominating the street scene and the setting of historic buildings. Proposals for vehicle hard standings should be located or screened to minimise the impact on the surrounding area. Careful attention to paving and landscaping is required. Planning applications to erect a fence, wall or railings on the front curtilage boundary, would normally be supported if they are of a type which prevails in the area. The total or substantial removal of existing boundary structures such as historic walls to enable car parking is unlikely to be supported.

For further information on Article 4 Directions please contact the:

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