

LIVING IN AN **ARTICLE 4** **DIRECTION AREA**

ESC Guidance Note

What is an **Article 4 direction**?

An Article 4 direction is a planning regulation that places tighter controls on buildings, to help protect what is special about them or the area where they are located. You will have to apply for planning permission for some changes which would normally be allowed without planning permission. An Article 4 direction does not stop change, instead it means the Council will need to review the plans and that they must be designed sensitively to protect what is special about the building or the area.

Why do we use Article 4 directions?

East Suffolk has a number of Conservation Areas that cover sensitive historic villages and towns. The designation of Conservation Areas helps to preserve the character and appearance of these areas. However, even in Conservation Areas certain changes can still be made without needing planning permission, and incremental changes can add up to degrade the character and appearance of historic places. Article 4 directions are therefore in place in some Conservation Areas, to protect the important heritage in our district by making sure that changes are made sensitively.

Is my house covered by an Article 4 direction?

Article 4 directions only apply to houses. They do not apply to apartments or commercial properties, as these types of building have different planning restrictions. Find out if your house is covered on the Council's Heritage webpages.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/article-4-directions>

When do I need to apply for planning permission?

You will need to apply for permission for the changes that are described below if they **front a relevant location**.

What is a relevant location?

Planning permission is required to make any change of design or material to any part of the building facing what is called a 'relevant location' – that is, a public thoroughfare, defined as a highway, footpath, bridleway, waterway or open space (often the front of the building).

You will need to apply for **planning permission** to:

Build new outbuildings: Outbuildings to the front of a building will not normally be permitted, as they can interrupt the unity of terraces or the view down an attractive street.

Alter architectural details: Many of the buildings in Article 4 direction areas have decorative details like moulded brickwork or timber balconies that reflect the seaside location. These are features which contribute to the character of the area and need to be retained and repaired wherever possible.

Replace windows and doors: Houses in the Article 4 direction areas typically have original doors and windows that are painted timber, and the windows sometimes have unusual glazing patterns. Keeping original windows and doors will best preserve the character and appearance of a building. Repairing them should therefore always be considered first. However, if they cannot be repaired, you should replace them in a design and with materials to match. Upgrading from single glazing to double glazing is possible if the design of the new window is similar to the original window. Timber windows will best replicate traditional designs. If windows or doors have already been replaced and are a poor-quality design, then a better design will help to enhance the character and appearance of the building and the area.

Make changes to the roof: You will need permission to make changes like replacing the roof material with a different material or adding a rooflight. Typical roof materials are slate or clay tiles. Rooflights on the front of a building will not normally be acceptable. They may be

acceptable on the side or rear of a building if they are small and sit flush with the roof surface.

Take down a chimneys or install a flue: Original chimneys should be kept, as they are important townscape features. If they are in poor condition they should be repaired with matching materials. New chimneys should be built in the same materials as original chimneys, which would usually be brick in these Article 4 direction areas. Flues or vent pipes should be as small as possible and should be located away from the front of a building.

Build a porch: Buildings in the Article 4 direction areas often have recessed porches which should not be filled in. On the rare occasion when a new porch would be acceptable it should not disrupt the appearance of the front of a house or the consistent appearance of a group of similar buildings, like a terrace of houses. The design should be an appropriate size for the building. An open canopy or small lean-to or pitched roof enclosed porch are usually the best solutions.

Build, alter or demolish boundary walls, fences and gates: Original historic boundary treatments may be brick walls, metal fencing or a combination of both, or neither. These features need to be retained and repaired if they are historic. Timber fences are less likely to be appropriate.

Install hardstanding to the front garden: Original front gardens need to be retained and the creation of new off-road parking will not usually be permitted.

Painting: In most Article 4 direction areas (all except North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft/Kirkley) any painting of a relevant elevation requires planning permission.

When is Planning Permission not needed?

Planning permission is not needed for:

- Repairs or maintenance.
- Changes which took place before the Article 4 direction was in place.

Are there any other works which need planning permission if I also live in a **Conservation Area**?

All the Article 4 directions are within Conservation Areas. Other works also need planning permission if the building is within a Conservation Area, such as applying external wall insulation, demolition of all or part of a building under a certain size and works to trees. Please check with the Council for more details.

Can I put **solar panels** on my house?

Article 4 directions do not stop you putting solar panels on your house. However, there are some rules for houses in Conservation Areas about how they can be installed. Solar panels should be located to minimise their impact on the look of the outside of the building. Permission is needed if you want to put them on a front wall or if they are higher than 0.2 metres from a roof slope which faces a road. More information can be found on the Council's website.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/conservation-areas>

Where can I find out more information?

Find out more about the Council's Heritage services, including information on Article 4s and Conservation Areas here:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/heritage>

Find out if your building is in an Article 4 Direction area or in a Conservation Area on the Council's GIS mapping system:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/geographic-information-system>

Find out more about when you need planning permission on the Government's Planning Portal:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

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Find our Article 4
direction web pages
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