



Living in an Article 4 Direction Area: Beccles

Broads Authority Guidance Note

What is an Article 4 direction?

An Article 4 direction is a planning regulation that places tighter controls on works to buildings, to help protect what is special about them and the amenity of 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 Local Planning Authority 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?

The Broads Authority 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 degrade the character and appearance of historic places. Article 4 directions are therefore in place in some Conservation Areas, to protect the amenity and the important heritage in our executive area 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 flats, commercial properties or listed buildings, as these types of building have different planning restrictions.

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 (river or broad) or open space. In the Broads, this can often be both the street-facing and river-facing side of a home.

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 (note the 'front' of the building can be at the highway or facing a river and may therefore be a structure such as a boatshed).

Alter architectural details: Many of the buildings in Article 4 direction areas have decorative details like moulded brickwork. 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 (which may face a highway or waterway) 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 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 this Article 4 direction area. Flues or vent pipes should be as small as possible and should be located away from the front of a building (which may face a highway or waterway).

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 (which may face a highway or waterway) need to be retained and the creation of new off-road parking will not usually be permitted.

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?

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 over a certain size and works to trees. Please check with the Authority for more details.

Can I put solar panels on my house?

There are some rules for houses in conservation areas about how solar panels 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 protrude more than 0.2 metres above a roof slope which faces a road. Please check with the Authority for more details.

Where can I find out more information?

Contact: planning@broads-authority.gov.uk

Tel: 01603 610734

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

www.planningportal.co.uk/