

RISE

Retrofit information,
support & expertise

Article 4 directions

Quick guide

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Summary

How to use this quick guide?

This quick guide has been prepared to assist local authorities and registered providers understand Article 4 Directions and how they must be considered when making decisions for retrofitting, especially in conservation areas. This is an introduction to the subject and those wishing to pursue this should refer to the relevant material on this topic on the RISE website.

What are Article 4 Directions?

Article 4 Directions are a planning tool used by local authorities to remove certain permitted development rights in specific areas. Normally, certain types of property changes, like extensions or conversions, can be carried out without needing full planning permission. However, when an Article 4 Direction is applied, it requires property owners to seek planning permission for these changes, even if they would normally be allowed under general permitted development rights.

Local authorities use Article 4 Directions to maintain the identity of areas, ensuring that any development is in line with the local planning strategy and preserves the character of the built environment. These directions can be applied to individual buildings or larger areas, depending on the local planning priorities.

What can Article 4 Directions restrict?

Article 4 Directions are a planning tool that is used by local authorities to control certain developments that would otherwise be allowed under permitted development rights. These restrictions are particularly common in areas with unique character or architectural importance, where uncontrolled changes could negatively affect the local environment or sense of place. While each Article 4 Direction is tailored to specific needs, common restrictions include the following:

- **Conversion of properties:**
 - **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):** Article 4 Directions can prevent the conversion of family homes into HMOs. This helps maintain the balance of the local housing mix and prevents overcrowding or the loss of traditional family homes in residential areas
 - **Commercial to residential conversions:** In areas where there are concerns over preserving local businesses or community spaces, Article 4 Directions can restrict the change of use from commercial to residential without full planning approval

- **External Build Alterations:**

- **Windows and Doors:** Article 4 Directions can prevent the installation of non-traditional materials, such as uPVC windows, ensuring that properties maintain their architectural integrity
- **Extensions and Roof Alterations:** Restrictions can be placed on the construction of extensions or changes to the roofline that could disrupt the character of the area or overshadow neighbouring properties

- **Demolition and Redevelopment:**

- **Demolition of Buildings:** In areas of historical or architectural significance, these directions can prevent the demolition of buildings without proper scrutiny, preserving the local heritage.

Why are Article 4 Directions in place?

Usually, property owners have quite a bit of flexibility to make minor exterior changes to their property without needing to get through the whole planning process. The purpose of Article 4 Directions in conservation areas is to uphold the historic character that gives conservation areas their significance and makes them so unique. It means that changes like replacing original windows require planning permission, which helps prevent the gradual erosion of the streetscape's historic character.

Article 4 Directions essentially protect properties from being converted or altered in a way that harms their heritage significance. The restrictions therefore help preserve the local area's character and sense of place.

Key challenges?

Article 4 Directions can present several challenges when it comes to retrofitting buildings, especially in conservation areas. Here are some key issues:

- **Planning requirements:** Article 4 Directions remove certain permitted development rights, meaning that even minor changes that affect the external appearance of a building, like replacing windows or doors, or adding insulation, require planning permission. This can add time, complexity, and cost to retrofit projects
- **Complexity:** The intricacies of Article 4 Direction regulation can make retrofit more challenging for homeowners, as they may need to provide detailed planning applications accompanied by scale drawings so that the local authority can assess the proposal's impact on heritage significance
- **Cost:** Due to the specialist nature of retrofitting buildings subject to Article 4 Directions, materials and labour costs can be strained and increase cost of retrofitting

Next steps

For anyone considering energy efficiency retrofit measures in conservation areas or areas where Article 4 Directions are in place, it is imperative to familiarise themselves with the intricacies of the and the supplementary heritage material on the RISE website.

It may also be useful to speak to your local authority about the changes you are considering. They may have experience in this area that can help guide your planning. Ensuring your retrofit works conserve the building's significance and comply with the consent system will take time and should be considered from the outset of the project.

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