A Guide to Article 4 Directions

Why is this important?

This guidance note explains the purpose and effect of the Article 4 Direction Notices that are now in place within the Adelaide Park Conservation Area and the Malone Park Conservation Area. If you are a resident or home-owner in either area, this will directly affect you if you wish to carry out certain changes to the property.

What are permitted development rights?

Planning legislation allows owners to make certain changes to their property without requiring planning permission. This is known as ‘permitted development’ and covers a range of minor changes including repairs, alterations or extensions.

What are Article 4 Directions?

Article 4 Directions allow a local planning authority to restrict the range of permitted development rights within a particular area, and are commonly used within Conservation Areas. When they are in place, it essentially means that if someone wishes to carry out works that would normally be considered permitted development, they may now need planning permission.

Why do we need Article 4 Directions?

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historical interest, which the council has a duty to preserve or enhance. Although works that would normally be covered under permitted development rights might be small in nature, they have the potential to be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Introducing an Article 4 Direction allows the planning authority more control over what works take place, as a way of protecting the character and appearance of the area. This does not mean that such works cannot be carried out or would be refused, but it does mean that careful thought must be given to make sure any changes are appropriate and sympathetic for both the property and the wider area.

Where will they apply in Belfast?

We have 13 Conservation Areas in Belfast. From Friday 19 April 2019, the first Article 4 Directions in the city will be applied to:

- Adelaide Park Conservation Area
- Malone Park Conservation Area

Article 4 Directions have not been used before in Northern Ireland, however they are widely used in other jurisdictions, and it is likely that more will be introduced here in the future.
**WHY were these areas chosen?**

Adelaide Park and Malone Park were chosen after a survey in 2015 demonstrated that a lot of properties in these areas have retained a large proportion of original, historic elements. Public consultation exercises were also carried out in 2016 and 2017, with surveys delivered to all residents in both areas. The responses demonstrated majority community support, and as such the council’s Planning Committee agreed to apply both Directions. In January 2019 the Department for Infrastructure formally approved their implementation.

**HOW do Article 4 Directions affect me?**

If you own a property or live within the Adelaide Park Conservation Area or Malone Park Conservation Area, you may need planning permission for certain works, including the following development:

- Removal & replacing window frames & doors to front & side elevations
- Erection or construction of a porch outside an external door
- Installing a hard surface, such as a driveway or parking space, to front & side gardens
- Any works involving a gate, fence, wall or enclosure along the boundary
- Painting the outside front or side walls of a building in a different colour or form

This is a general summary of the works; the specific details and legislation are set out in full in Schedule 1 of each Direction. The Direction also includes a map, referred to as Schedule 2, which shows the actual properties which are affected.

**WHAT do I need to provide if making a planning application?**

A reduced fee of £64 is required for any application made for works affected by the Article 4 Direction. Where details are required in support of applications, photographs and drawings by suppliers and companies will normally be acceptable. Detailed plans would rarely be required, however the council will advise you if and when they may be needed.

**WHERE can I get more advice or guidance?**

A formal Notice of the Direction has been provided to each property affected. These can also be viewed within our offices (address below) or on our website www.belfastcity.gov.uk.

For further guidance on Article 4 Directions or how to apply for planning permission, please visit our website or contact us directly at the address below, by phone on 028 9050 0510, or e-mail at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Belfast City Council
Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BP

If you want independent advice about the Direction or its effect on you or your property, you should contact a lawyer, planning consultant or other professional advisor specialising in planning matters.