

Information Leaflet

Article 4 Direction for Glastonbury

Background

Glastonbury is an important historic settlement on the edge of the Somerset Levels. It has well documented connections with early Christianity and a wealth of attractive historic buildings.

The Glastonbury Conservation Area was designated in 1976 when it covered the Abbey site, the High Street and the streets immediately adjacent to the Abbey. In 1992 a substantial extension was approved, adding The Tor and the surrounding land. Further extensions in 2010 included areas of well preserved, 19th-century housing. A character appraisal of

the conservation area was also produced at this time and included recommendations for the introduction of an article 4 direction to help preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Glastonbury Conservation Area.

In conservation areas the aim is to encourage the retention of high quality features on buildings and to enhance the environment of which they are part. Article 4 directions can be used to withdraw certain permitted development rights 'in the interest of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a conservation area.



*Well detailed Victorian villas,
Chilkwell Street*



*Traditional building elements (left)
and modern replacements (right)*

What to Protect?

At the centre of Glastonbury, and forming the core of the conservation area, are a number of medieval streets lined with many listed buildings. This historic core is surrounded by mainly 19th-century suburban development which was specifically chosen to be included within the conservation area due to many of the properties retaining their original detailing.

Unfortunately, even though these dwellings are of historic and architectural interest, they are afforded little in the way of formal protection. Therefore, these attractive properties could easily be changed beyond recognition, thus detracting from the intrinsic character of Glastonbury.

Local Planning Authorities, however, have powers to control these changes by removing certain permitted development rights by making article 4 directions. Once a direction has been served, planning permission is required for those classes of development listed. Such directions affect only unlisted dwelling houses in single occupation, (i.e. not subdivided into flats or with individual rooms let to

tenants), and only those elevations that front onto a highway, waterway, private street or other publically accessible space (including side elevations of corner properties).

Flats, shops, offices and other commercial buildings and houses in multiple occupation do not have the benefit of permitted development rights and so planning permission for changes is already required.

Article 4 directions bring many benefits to a conservation area. They:

- Protect the special character of a conservation area.
- Help to protect and enhance the quality of the environment.
- Encourage the use of local and traditional craft skills.
- Encourage the use of local and traditional building materials which are often more environmentally friendly and sustainable than their modern equivalents.
- May help to maintain house values and protect a conservation area from unsympathetic and damaging change.

Following the recommendation within the conservation area appraisal and a subsequent town council meeting Glastonbury Town Council has requested that Mendip District Council introduces an article 4 direction in parts of the town to control the following types of development:

The enlargement, improvement or other alteration to the principal elevation e.g. windows and doors

Windows are usually one of a house's most visible features. Their shape, character, materials and methods of construction have a significant impact on how a building looks and works.

In Glastonbury the timber sash window is prominent with its design varying depending on the date of the individual property. Many of the town's Victorian dwellings also have bay windows; again their style and height dependent upon the age of the building.

The damage that may be caused by the replacement of any original

window with a modern unit of different material, design or method of opening is potentially immense. Therefore, original windows should ideally be kept and repaired rather than replaced.

If repair is not possible then any replacement windows should be sympathetic to the host building in their design, scale, proportions and materials.

The thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes and other details (e.g. the method of opening) should be appropriate to the date of the building or to the date when the window aperture was made.



Replacing traditional timber windows can have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of a property

Many of the properties in Glastonbury would have had timber panelled doors which became common in modest buildings from the Victorian period. Their style depended on the date of construction of the property but during the Victorian period the 4-panelled door was most common although 6-panelled and simple plank doors were also used.

Unsympathetic and uncharacteristic changes and the replacement of historic doors with those of a modern design or material can detract from the appearance of a house, street or area. Any replacement doors should, therefore, copy the original with regard to the materials, the detail of the design, and the finish.

Replacement doors which have a stained or varnished finish, have integral fanlights, or non-traditional glazing or panelling patterns are unlikely to be acceptable.

The demolition, erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate fence, wall or other means of enclosure

Any fence, gate or wall should be appropriate to the location of the house which it surrounds. In Glastonbury some boundary walls were constructed from natural, local stone but the vast majority were local red brick.

In towns the loss of large lengths of front garden boundary walls for off-street parking and the removal of walls between adjacent properties will generally be resisted.

The setting-back or lowering of boundary walls to facilitate access would also be discouraged as this would destroy the integral sense of enclosure that boundary walls give to a street.



Boundary walls should be constructed from an appropriate material

The installation, alteration, replacement of a flue or soil and vent pipe

External flues should be avoided on any elevation which fronts a public space. Where acceptable they should be constructed from an appropriate material and be of a traditional size, profile and finish.

Alterations to a roof

Unsympathetic and uncharacteristic changes to a roof can detract from the quality or special character of a house, street or area. Wherever possible the original structure, shape, pitch and covering of the roof should be retained, which in Glastonbury is usually profiled clay tiles.

Dormer windows can be a traditional feature in many historic roofscapes; however, inappropriate or over-large dormers can be damaging to the historic character and appearance of an area.

The insertion of rooflights into an existing roofslope can also damage the historic character of an area unless sensitively handled.

The replacement of traditional roofing materials with modern alternatives such as concrete tiles or artificial slates will generally be resisted.

The installation of solar panels, while clearly a change to the appearance of a roof, is considered in a separate section later in this leaflet.

The installation, alteration, replacement or demolition of a chimney

Chimneys are often one of a house's most visible features and help to give interest, character and symmetry to its roofline.



*Chimney pots should be retained.
Porches should not draw focus away from the host building*

Original chimney stacks and pots should always be retained, even when no longer needed. If repair is not possible then identical units (in terms of design, materials, colours and finishes) should be sourced. Works to change or remove original chimney stacks and pots can unbalance a house's symmetry and damage its character.

The construction, enlargement, alteration or demolition of small extensions or porches

A porch can be a key focal point of a house and should be designed with considerable care and with regard to the area's context and local building traditions.

The painting of a dwelling house

Many of the properties in Glastonbury were constructed from a characteristic red brick which was often sourced locally. The painting of these external surfaces would radically alter the character and appearance of the town. As a result previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted.

Houses which are already painted or rendered should be maintained regularly. Traditional lime-based render should not be replaced with a cement-based alternative and waterproof or gloss paints should not be used on surfaces covered with traditional render.

All paint used should be porous to prevent moisture entrapment and long-term deterioration of the building fabric.

The installation, alteration or replacement of photovoltaic and solar-thermal panelling

The council recognises the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that all our buildings need to be adapted to become more resilient to climate change. However, we also recognise that some forms of adaptation and mitigation may harm the significance of historic buildings and other heritage assets.

Due to their prominence, poorly designed and inappropriately located solar panels can seriously undermine the character of a street.

Siting panels on any principal elevation should be avoided: a rear roof slope or a hidden roof valley may be an appropriate alternative location, or ground-mounting solar equipment should be considered.

This class of development will be covered under a separate article 4 direction and will be subject to a three-week public consultation prior to any implementation.



Roof-mounted solar panels are extremely conspicuous within this Glastonbury streetscape

The Effects of the Article 4 Direction

Planning permission is now required for changes to windows, doors, chimneys, roofs, flues, boundary walls and external elevations as described above. Controls for photovoltaic and thermal solar panelling will be introduced subject to a three-week public consultation.

The fact that an application may be required does not necessarily mean that permission will not be granted; however, the council will pay particular regard to the extent to which the proposals affect the character and appearance of the area.

Permission will not normally be given to replace traditional features with modern ones, or to use substitute materials such as aluminium or plastic.

Where modern materials have replaced traditional ones in the past, it is expected that more appropriate or sympathetic materials and details will be restored when circumstances allow or when further replacement is needed.

Repairs

Planning permission for repairs is *not* required provided these are carried out in a *traditional* manner to the *precise* details of the original elements involved and using the same materials.

Minor, worn-out elements can be replaced without permission, provided these replacements are *exact replicas*.

Energy Efficiency

The council supports the Government's aim to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings. It is understood that many improvements can be made which would significantly enhance the comfort of the building for its users as well as providing savings on fuel bills; however, for many historic buildings an appropriate balance needs to be achieved between building conservation and measures to improve energy efficiency in order to avoid damage to the building's character, significance and fabric.

Once the building's significance, construction and the way it performs have been fully understood then the appropriate balance can be determined from a position of knowledge.

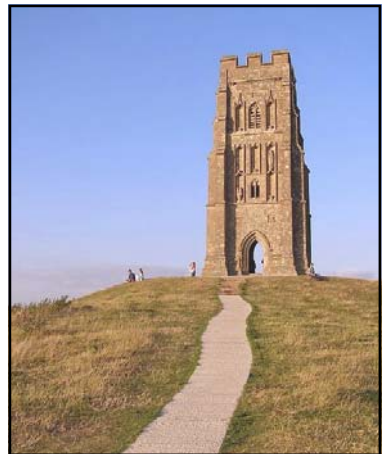
Compensation

Under Section 108 of the Planning Act, local planning authorities may be liable to pay compensation to those whose permitted development rights have been withdrawn if they:

- Refuse planning permission for development which would have been classed as permitted development if it were not for an article 4 direction;
- or
- Receive planning permission subject to more limiting conditions than the GDPO (General Development Procedure Order) would normally allow, as a result of an article 4 direction being in place.

Compensation may also be claimed for abortive expenditure or other loss or damage directly attributable to the withdrawal of permitted development rights.

The amount payable will be relative to the difference between the value of the property had the work been carried out with no restrictions minus the cost of the works. However, the calculation of this sum is a complex matter, requiring specialist legal and valuation advice.



Glastonbury Tor

FAQs

Q: Why are you introducing an article 4 direction?

A: The inappropriate alteration and replacement of traditional features such as windows, doors, chimneys, roofs and boundary treatments can have a detrimental and erosive effect on the character and appearance of an area. The article 4 direction will help the council to ensure that the special character and sensitive fabric of these areas is not diluted by inappropriate alterations.

Q: Why have you introduced the article 4 direction without consulting residents and are you allowed to do this?

A: If such a consultation were to take place without the protection afforded by an article 4 direction already being in place then homeowners would still have a period of time to make changes to traditional features such as windows, doors, chimneys, roofs and boundary treatments without the need to ask the council for permission.

Within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended, the local planning authority has the ability to withdraw permitted development rights with immediate effect if it considers the development to which the direction relates would constitute a threat to the amenity of their area. In this instance Mendip District Council believes that the exercise of permitted development rights would undermine the visual amenity of the area and damage the historic environment.

The decision to serve this article 4 direction was taken following a request from members of Glastonbury Town Council.

Q: Why is the installation, alteration or replacement of photovoltaic and solar thermal panelling being covered under a separate direction?

A: This class of development is not grouped with those covered within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order 2010 that can be withdrawn through an article 4

direction with immediate effect. Therefore this class of works will be covered under a separate non-immediate direction.

This will be subject to public consultation where residents will be encouraged to provide comment on the matter which the council will examine before making any final decisions. Residents will be contacted to inform them when any decisions have been made.

Q: How much will a planning application cost?

A: Any planning application required as a consequence of an article 4 direction is exempt from the usual planning application fee.

Q: Can I appeal the decision to impose the article 4 direction?

A: There is no formal right of appeal against the making of an article 4 direction but the authority must take into account any representations made by owners/occupiers.

Q: If I have already changed my windows, can you make me change them back?

A: No, the direction cannot be applied retrospectively

Q: If I have already installed solar panels on my house, can you make me remove them?

A: No, the direction cannot be applied retrospectively

Q: Where can I get some advice about what changes would be acceptable to my windows, doors, etc?

A: Contact Mendip District Council customer services number (01749 648999) and ask to speak to a member of the heritage conservation team.

Q: Does this inhibit me from improving the energy efficiency of my home and reducing my carbon footprint?

A: There are many options still available to you to improve the energy efficiency of your home:

for example, the introduction of insulation and the use of energy-saving electrical products.

Secondary glazing is also a good way of improving the heat and sound insulation of your property without the need to alter the original windows. Slim-line double glazing units are now widely available that can be installed in timber frames and still retain the traditional proportions of historic windows.

Timber windows are themselves much more sustainable than their uPVC alternatives as they come from a renewable source and, if properly maintained, will far outlast their uPVC equivalents.

Q: Will I need permission to carry out repairs to my property?

A: You will not need permission for repairs provided they are carried out using the same materials as the existing building element and that appropriate traditional methods are used.

If you are in any doubt as to whether permission may be required, or would like further advice on any of the aspects covered in this leaflet, please telephone Customer Services on the number below and ask to speak to a member of the heritage conservation team.

The article 4 direction for Glastonbury is supported by Glastonbury Town Council.

