

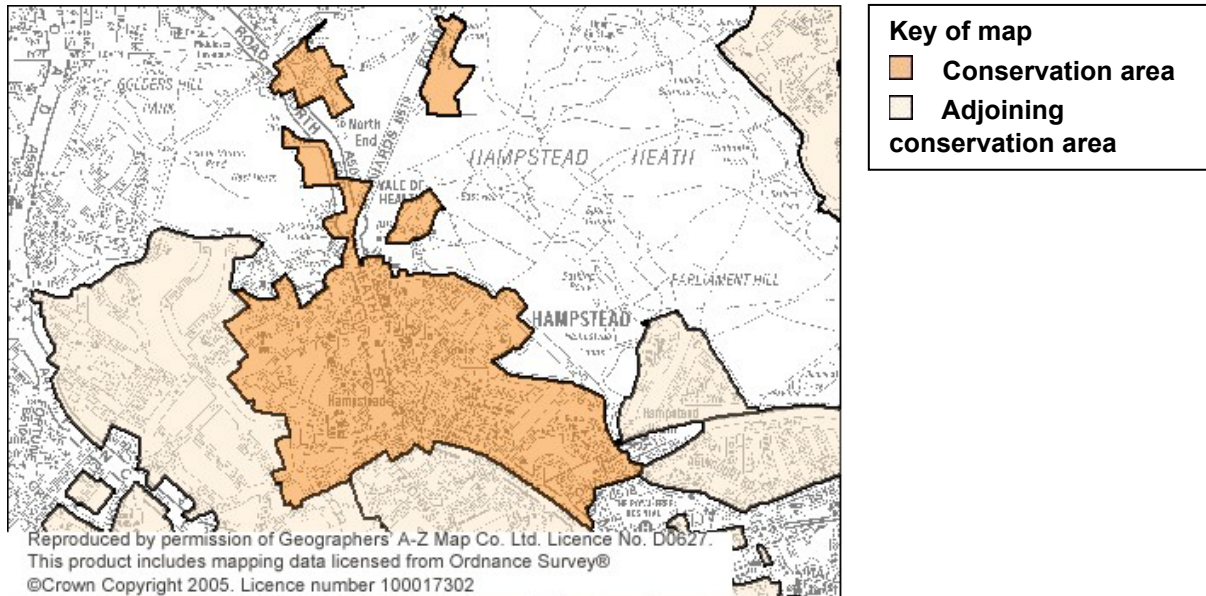
Hampstead Conservation Area Design Guide

Advice on alterations and repair
following the introduction of an Article
4(1) Direction

Updated June 2026

Introduction

An Article 4(1) Direction was approved by the Secretary of State on [insert date] on most of the properties in the Hampstead Conservation Area. This means that additional planning controls have been introduced and some types of work which previously did not need planning permission now do.



The Article 4(1) Direction applies only to the fronts of properties, and the sides of properties which face the street, and includes single family dwelling houses and houses converted to flats. It seeks to prevent harmful works taking place and to ensure that Hampstead Conservation Area keeps its historic character and appearance and remains an attractive and desirable place to live into the future.

This Guide explains why the Hampstead Conservation Area is special and gives advice on what works are suitable and what will require planning permission. It encourages owners and occupiers to undertake sensitive repairs and to reinstate historic features where they have been lost. Even minor changes to the appearance of properties can destroy the character and appearance of the area, and potentially lower the value of the property, so the basic principle underlying all this advice is to:

- keep your historic property in good repair
- retain and repair historic features rather than replace them.

THERE IS CURRENTLY NO FEE FOR APPLICATIONS MADE AS A RESULT OF THE ARTICLE 4(1) DIRECTION.

You should show this Guide to your builder.

Alterations which are not carried out in accordance with this Guide may be subject to enforcement action by the Council.

Why is Hampstead special?

Hampstead was one of the first ever conservation areas to be created following the Town & Country Planning Act in 1968. It is an area of great appeal and diverse historic character, which local people have long campaigned to preserve, for all to enjoy.

Hampstead retains much of its 18th century village charm, with narrow passageways, steep lanes and small squares at the heart of the conservation area. The surrounding streets were largely developed in the 19th century, and these grand red and yellow brick properties retain many of their attractive Arts & Crafts features such as original windows and doors, decorative details, mature green front gardens, ornate boundary walls and railings.

The diversity of architectural style and consistently high quality in design is what makes Hampstead special, while its proximity to Hampstead Heath, lush gardens and street trees all contribute strongly to the leafy village character.



Additional planning controls that have been introduced

The following works to the fronts of properties, and the sides of properties which face the road now need planning permission:

1. Any works to enlarge, alter or improve your property including replacing part or all of any window or door, and any works which alter the appearance of decorative features, including their removal.
2. Alterations to porches – this includes enclosing the porch or altering the way it looks.
3. Painting the front of a property if it will differ from the traditional surface treatment. You do not need to apply for planning permission to repaint your property if it is already painted or covered in 'stucco' or a traditional render finish, provided it remains the same colour.
4. Additions or alterations to the roof or chimney, including the installation of a rooflight.

5. Installation of a flue or soil and vent pipe at the front of a property
6. Erecting, altering or demolishing a gate, wall or fence at the front of a property
7. Making, enlarging, improving or altering a hard surface at the front of a property

The following sections give more information on each of these categories.

Like-for-like replacement and repair does not need planning permission.

What does 'like-for-like' mean?

If existing features are beyond cost-effective repair you may wish to replace them with like-for-like replacements. Like-for-like replacement and repair does not need planning permission.

Like-for-like approaches are those that:

- match in materials, colour and surface finish (e.g. bricks and mortar)
- have the same dimensions and
- have the same pattern and detailed profile
- replicate original details such as window catches, handles, pulleys, etc (these can sometimes be transferred from the old feature to the new).

For example if you are rebuilding sections of boundary wall to match the existing, using matching bricks, matching mortar and matching the profile of the mortar pointing, this will not need planning permission.

Replacement windows should match the glazing bar / frame / window cill dimensions and way of openings - for example vertically sliding sash windows or side- or top-hinged casements can be replaced like-for-like without planning permission.

THERE IS CURRENTLY NO FEE FOR APPLICATIONS MADE AS A RESULT OF THE ARTICLE 4(1) DIRECTION.

1. Enlargement, alteration or improvement

1.1 Windows and doors

Historic windows and doors can last indefinitely if they are properly maintained by the homeowner with the occasional assistance of a joiner. It is also cheaper in the long run to repair timber features than to replace them because the replacements will have a shorter life span than well maintained historic joinery. Untraditional replacement windows and doors are the biggest threat to property values in conservation areas (source: English Heritage).

Replacing original windows on the front elevation (or side elevations where these front the street) now needs planning permission.



1.2 Reducing heat loss through historic windows and doors

Simple measures such as heavy curtains and blinds will retain heat, while mending cracks and eliminating gaps in your windows and doors and fitting draught-strips and brushes (available from any DIY store), can reduce air loss by as much as 86%. Secondary glazing used with well-fitting shutters can cut heat loss by 60%. When fitting secondary glazing you should ensure that the meeting rails on the secondary glazing units match the location of the glazing bar / meeting rail of the existing windows.

None of these works need planning permission.

Other measures to reduce energy use such roof insulation, and turning the central heating down by one degree, will also help make savings, as will the installation of a highefficiency condensing boiler with individual thermostatic controls on each radiator.

1.3 Double glazing

The replacement of historic Victorian or Edwardian windows with untraditional modern alternatives is likely to detract from the appearance and reduce the value of your home so you should think carefully before replacing your original windows. Some traditional glazing patterns (see above and left) are difficult to replicate with thicker double glazed units, so repair, rather than replacement, should always be the first choice. Large paned sash or casement windows may be possible to double glaze, either in the

existing frame, or in new joinery, in a way that replicates the appearance of the original 'like for like'.

This now needs planning permission.

There are a number of specialist companies who can undertake this work (see: Key Contacts).

1.4 Decorative glass

Decorative glass has an important ornamental role in addition to letting light into the building; it may be stained, etched held together with lead 'cames' or a combination of all three. It should always be retained and repaired and specialist advice should be sought (see: Key Contacts).

Its removal and replacement on front elevations (or side elevations where these front the street) needs planning permission and will be resisted.

Like-for-like replacement

If your existing features such as windows and doors are beyond cost-effective repair you may wish to replace them with like-for-like replacements.

You do not need planning permission to do this if the new window or door:

- *matches in materials*
- *has the same pattern and profile of glazing bars / frame*
- *has the same glazing bar / frame / window cill dimensions and opens in the same way (for example vertically sliding sash windows or side- or top-hinged casements).*
- *any details should be replicated and original catches, handles, pulleys, etc, should where possible be transferred to the new window or door.*



1.5 Decorative Details

Decorative details often occur around the windows and doors of historic properties, and became more flamboyant (see above) in the latter half of the 19th century. They may include columns, mouldings and rubbed brickwork and render decoration particularly to porches, tile-hanging, render panels and other ornate brick and terracotta features. The stately house pictured below has an imposing double-height bay window with window mullions (vertical bars) in render to resemble stone and a very ornate 'crowstepped' gable decorated in brick and render; in a Medieval Tudor 'revival' style. Decorative details are very important to the character of Hampstead and should be preserved and reinstated where lost or damaged.

Their removal now needs planning permission and will be resisted.



2. Alterations to porches

Porches are an often overlooked but are an integral feature in the architectural design and historic appeal of your property. Finely detailed brick, timber and ironwork porches or porch hoods, sometimes with tiled roofs, are also used to great effect in the conservation area. Depending on the date of your property you may have a grander porch or 'portico' with columns, popular in the mid 19th century as a result of a revival in Classical antiquity, or a humbler arched version (see above), or a simple timber structure (see below) which dates the property in the latter half of the decade. The porch pictured right is a charming and unusual example of the 'Gothic' revival style from the mid 20th century, with its ogee capped roof and filigree carving.

Adding a new porch or altering existing porches or porticos on front elevations (or side elevations where this fronts the street) now needs planning permission and will be resisted.



3. Painting the front of a property

3.1 Brick-fronted Properties

Hampstead has many attractive properties fronted in red or yellow London stock brick, which give a warm and cheerful character to individual streets when combined with traditional details such as multi-paned windows and prominent roofs. Unpainted brickwork should never be painted over (even in a matching colour).

The painting over of unpainted brickwork on the front elevation (or side elevation where this fronts the street) now needs planning permission and will be resisted.

Where unpainted brickwork is combined with small sections of render on the frontage, the render should always be repaired in matching materials.

3.2 Stucco or render-fronted Properties

A small number of properties in Hampstead are finished in stucco - a type of render used to give brickwork the appearance of dressed stonework. Stucco was in vogue in the 1850s, and gives properties a grand appearance to compete with respectable West London suburbs like Belgravia and Kensington.

Stucco needs regular painting with traditional permeable paints such as Farrow & Ball or Naturepaint, unless it has never been painted in the past, in which case it should be left unpainted. Paint colours should match the other buildings in the block and should ideally conform to a traditional palette.

Repainting stucco does not need planning permission.



4. Additions and alterations to the roof or chimney

Unaltered roofs and chimneys play an important role in defining the character of Hampstead. While some of the earliest 18th and 19th century properties – for example on Downshire Hill - are distinguished by roofs hidden behind tall parapets, the later brick-fronted properties have more prominent and decorative roofs – often low and sweeping, covering projecting bay windows and porches or creating turrets. These are often covered in clay roof tiles as opposed to slate (as left, in Gainsborough Gardens). It is important to preserve these roof forms, materials and details as they contribute significantly to the character and quality of the area.

The following works now need planning permission on a roof slope or a side roof slope where it faces the street:

- *reroofing in a material which differs from the original or existing material*
- *the removal without re-instatement of any decorative details such as decorative ridge or hip tiles*

- *the installation of a rooflight (even if it is a flush “conservation” style roof light)*
- *the alteration, demolition or partial demolition of a chimney.*



5. Installation of a flue, chimney or soil and vent pipe

Services such as flues (including for biomass boilers), soil and vent pipes and new chimneys should always be located on the side or rear elevation, so that the smart, public face of the building remains untouched. *New flues, chimneys or soil vent pipes now need planning permission on the front elevation (and sides where these front the street) and will be resisted.* Minor alterations such as the replacement of a cowl with one the same size or smaller does not need planning permission.

6. Walls, Railings, Fences, and Hedges

Unbroken runs of boundary walls to green front gardens are one of the most noticeable aspects of Hampstead’s historic character. The traditional treatment of the boundary varies according to the date and style of property.

Most properties have traditional low brick walls with gate piers and occasional details picked out in stone or render. Often the simple, low boundary walls would originally have had dark-painted railings to cap them, so where historic railings survive they are very rare indeed and should never be removed, but sensitivity repaired, and reinstated where lost (see Key Contacts for repair specialists). Boundary walls, hedges and railings all help give the area its serene and respectable charm, and by restoring them where they have been removed residents can restore the attractive qualities of the streetscape for residents and passers by.

The demolition of boundary walls and railings facing the street now needs planning permission and will be resisted.

Where boundary walls or railings have been lost or replaced in non-original materials or to a different design we encourage residents to restore them to their original form. Weatherstruck or bucket-handle pointing is unlikely to be original and is rarely appropriate. Cement mortar for pointing is also likely to be a later addition and can harm historic brickwork so we would encourage a lime based mortar for pointing.

Hedges should be retained and replanted where they are a feature of the streetscape. The like-for-like maintenance and repair of boundaries does not require planning permission.



7. Front Gardens

Green front gardens are vital not only in preserving the attractive, tranquil qualities of the conservation area, but also in providing wildlife corridors, enhancing biodiversity and reducing flood risk. Planting more soft landscaping – grass, flowers, shrubs and small trees – in front gardens, and reinstating it where lost, helps to ensure that Hampstead remains a healthy, natural and beautiful place to live.

The creation of a hard surface at the front of a property, or the side of a property which faces the road, now needs planning permission and will be resisted.

Vegetation in front gardens should be retained and replanted where lost. Original tiled paths and landscaping materials such as York stone should be retained and repaired.



Frequently Asked Questions

What about minor alterations?

Minor changes which do not detract from the character or appearance of your building such as painting your doors or windows and other periodic repairs such as the installation of a single light to the porch, or a burglar alarm box do not need planning permission.

Unsure if you need planning permission?

This guide only covers those works which now need planning permission due to the introduction of Article 4(1). To check for other works which might require planning permission such as rear extensions, lightwells, dormer windows and garden sheds please check the Camden website:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/planning-building-development>

If your property is a listed building you may require listed building consent for undertaking certain works to your property. More information can be found on the Camden website: www.camden.gov.uk/conservation-and-listed-buildings

Are there any fees for applications made as a result of Article 4(1) Directions?

No. There is no additional fee for an application made as a result of the Article 4(1) Directions.

Are listed buildings covered by these measures?

There are nearly 500 listed buildings in Hampstead Conservation Area. Listed building consent is required for any works which affects the historic or architectural character of a listed building. Regular maintenance and 'like for like' repairs which match the original work in every way do not need listed building consent. But if repairs use materials or methods that differ from the original then consent will be needed.

Alterations that involve the removal of original parts of the building, that change windows or external brickwork, or that change internal layouts of buildings will require listed building consent.

Internal decoration and the replacement of kitchen and bathroom fittings would not normally require consent, but if new fixings to the building are needed, or new service pipes, flues or vents are being added then consent will be needed.

In addition, under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended), the alteration, enlargement or demolition of a boundary wall is not permitted development on a listed building, and planning permission is required for this work.

Key Contacts and Further Reading

Planning:

Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee
www.camden.gov.uk then search for 'Hampstead CAAC'

The Hampstead Conservation Advisory Committee is a group of local residents which includes some architectural and planning experts. It is constituted in response to legislative advice, with the role of advising Camden on the merits of every planning application made in four Conservation Areas:

Hampstead, South End Green, Fitzjohn's/Netherhall and Redington/Frognaal. Importantly, we strive to include members from all parts of these areas, so that our advice is informed by local knowledge. HCAAC is always looking for new members and interested residents are invited to apply to this address.

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/hampstead-neighbourhood-forum>

London Borough of Camden Planning and Conservation advice

www.camden.gov.uk/conservation-and-listed-buildings

Planning Portal

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

<https://www.gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales>

Specialist Conservation Advice:

A list of contractors with experience in historic building conservation and based both in and outside Camden are available from the Conservation and Urban Design team. In addition, the RIBA holds a list of accredited architects with experience of working with historic buildings.

Alternatively you can search for companies and read articles about repair in:

- Directory of Building Conservation
<http://www.buildingconservation.com>
- Green & Low Carbon Construction Directory
<http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk>
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation
<https://ihbconline.co.uk/toolbox/>
- Historic England
<https://historicengland.org.uk/>
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
<http://www.spab.org.uk>, Tel: 020 7377 1644

- Heritage Gateway
<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>
- The Victorian Society
www.victorian-society.org.uk

Publications

- London Borough of Camden, *Hampstead Conservation Area Statement* (available from Camden Planning reception)
- Hunt, Roger & Suhr, Marianne: *The Old House Handbook - A Practical Guide to Care and Repair* published in association with The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (Frances Lincoln Limited 2008)
- Powys, A.R: *Repair of Ancient Building*; Third Edition - A reprint of the 1920s classic read for any owner of an old (and non-necessarily ancient) house.
- Rock, Ian: *The Victorian House Manual*, RICS Books
- Wedd, Kitt: *The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House*, published by The Victorian Society