



Houses in Multiple Occupation



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INTRODUCTION

The Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is the statutory planning framework for the future of the whole Borough.

To help you when you apply for planning permission, and to give the background to both the UDP and other Council policies, the Environment Department has produced a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs).

Although not a formal part of the UDP, the guidance is a material consideration when the Council is dealing with planning applications.

This Guidance Note:

- Identifies the relevant UDP policy (for a full statement of the policy, the UDP itself should be consulted).
- Gives planning guidance on design and standards.
- Provides general advice as well as some information on non-town planning matters such as Building Regulations and Highways, which may need separate approvals from the Council.

This Guidance does not prescribe inflexible standards or standard solutions, but instead describes the design principles and performance criteria to be aimed for.

The word 'normally' is implied in much of what follows, but has been omitted to keep the text short.

Most design principles will be well known to architects and other qualified designers, who can use the document as a check list.

This guidance has also been prepared as a practical tool to help those who submit planning applications.

This guidance is updated more frequently than the Plan itself, and you are encouraged to discuss your proposals with planning staff before you make a formal application.

Please remember that this is guidance only, and that your application will always be considered on its merits.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In accordance with PPG12 'Development Plans' the Council is required to carry out public consultation on the document. The current version of the SPG has been prepared in conjunction with the UDP policy changes which have gone through public consultation. It however includes a new list of streets where further conversions will not normally be allowed.

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Background

In addition to the requirements under Planning, there are a significant number of other standards with which HMOs must comply, particularly those of the Council's Environmental Health Service. Compliance with Planning requirements does not necessarily mean compliance with Environmental Health requirements and vice versa. This document indicates which matters are Planning requirements and which are requirements of Environmental Health and other Council services.

Planning Requirements

The main objectives of the UDP policy framework are:

- to provide for the needs of the growing number of small households;
- to ensure that the accommodation thus provided is of a satisfactory standard;
- to prevent further large scale losses of large family houses, that is houses with four or more bedrooms;
- to prevent over-concentration of HMOs in order to minimise the problems of increased on-street parking and the deterioration in the residential environment.

WHAT IS AN HMO?

An HMO is defined by the 1985 Housing Act (as amended by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) as 'a house which is occupied by persons who do not form a single household.'

Environmental Health interprets this definition as being inclusive of a variety of types of accommodation, including shared houses, bedsits, hostels, bed and breakfast facilities, guest houses and self-contained converted flats.

For the purposes of planning legislation, it is interpreted as follows: 'a single family dwelling house or self-contained flat in a house organised in such a way that it becomes occupied by a number of separate households that share certain facilities in common.' Where a house is converted into flats, each flat becomes a separate housing unit. In the case of a house or flat divided into bedsits, the house or flat remains as one unit for planning purposes.

Please note that the Planning interpretation excludes hostels, bed and breakfast accommodation, hotels and guest houses and self-contained flats occupied by a single household.

Where a bedsit has exclusive use of kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities, it becomes subject to the Council's flat conversion policies and standards (see "Flat Conversions"). Under this guidance a minimum floor area of 30m² per studio flat or 45m² for a 1-bed flat is advised. If you are unsure as to whether or not your proposal is included in these definitions please contact a Planning officer or an Environmental Health officer, as appropriate addresses and telephone numbers are listed in the 'Who Else Should I Talk To?' section below.

UDP Policies

HMOs are covered in the Council's Unitary Development Plan mainly by Policies H19 and H21. Others may also apply; you should check with a planning officer for further details.

Assessing Your Application

Each application will be assessed on its merits, however the Council will not normally allow conversion of dwellings into non self-contained units:

1. Where the dwelling has an original gross floor area of less than 120m²

(Please refer to Appendix 1 for method of calculating floorspace).

2. Where the proposal would result in more than 25% of houses with four or more bedrooms in any one street being lost or having an unexpired consent for a change of use to hostels, flats or HMOs. This restriction applies to certain streets in Forest Gate, Park, Upton and Plashet wards, where a considerable number of houses with four or more bedrooms have been converted to HMOs, flats and hostels. The Council has prepared a list of streets where saturation level has been reached and no further HMOs will be permitted. This list will be updated as necessary (Please refer to Appendix 2).
3. Where a proposal for a new conversion to an HMO would lead to more than 10% of the properties in any one street and more than two properties adjacent to each other being in such use or having an unexpired consent for such use.
4. Where a proposal for a conversion to an HMO would result in the concentration of such premises to the detriment of the surrounding area's amenity.
5. Where there is insufficient off-street capacity for one parking space for every three HMO units proposed, and the proposed premises are situated in an area where there is insufficient on-street parking capacity (for further details please refer to the section below on Car Parking).
6. Within the Borough's Conservation Areas, where a proposal for a new conversion to an HMO would not preserve or enhance the historic or architectural character or appearance of the area.

Other Planning Considerations

1. Amenity Space

Wherever possible, residents living in an HMO should have access to a garden which should be a private area. When a dwelling house is to be converted the Council is concerned to ensure that the front and rear gardens are satisfactorily laid out and responsibility for their future maintenance allocated to the new occupants or the owner.

2. Car Parking

There should be sufficient off-street capacity for one parking space for every three HMO units. Exceptions to off-street parking requirements may be made where the Council considers the local road capacity is sufficient to reasonably accommodate on-street parking. Capacity of the street will be determined by the Council when assessing individual applications.

3. Refuse Disposal

Satisfactory arrangement must be made for the storage and collection of refuse. Refuse storage should normally be designed to accommodate one domestic 'wheelie bin' per HMO unit, up to five, when it may be more suitable to provide a 'Eurobin'. The basic standard issue 'wheelie bin' store has the following dimensions: height 1200mm; clear width of 600mm; depth 750mm. The 'Eurobin' has the following dimensions: height 1465mm; width 1360mm; depth 1070mm. The stores will also require a flush entrance so bins can be wheeled in and out. Since these bin stores will be significantly larger than normal dustbin stores, sensitive design and location of these structures will be important.

4. External Staircases

External staircases are not normally favoured, as they generally tend to create day lighting, overlooking and aesthetic problems. However if an

external staircase is required (for example, to conform with means of escape regulations, or to provide garden access, where alternative internal arrangements are not feasible) careful attention should be given to its siting and design, which could involve the erection of a screen in order to overcome the problems. Applicants are advised that under Part B of the Building Regulations 1991, an adequate means of escape will be required from any floor of any building sublet into separate accommodation. Planning permission will be required for the staircase.

5. Other External Matters

Where any external work is carried out, special regard should be given to the original features of the house which give the property its character. Where it is necessary to install new external pipe work (i.e. ventilation pipes, overflow pipes, etc.) this should be kept to a minimum and sited on the rear elevation of the property. The property should be kept in good order with regular painting; external areas, including gardens, should be properly maintained.

For developments carried out in Conservation Areas a high standard of external design will be expected, in order to preserve and enhance the historic or architectural character of the area.

6. Noise Insulation

Conditions may be attached to a planning permission to ensure that adequate noise insulation is achieved.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

The conversion of old buildings into HMOs would involve the adaptation of existing layout and rooms originally designed for different purposes. Unless careful consideration is given for the alteration of such buildings it could result in wasted space, convoluted stairs and corridors and rooms being unsuitable for their intended purposes due to their shape, size and position. The Council will apply the following minimum standards which are

necessary to ensure that the new accommodation provides sufficient space for the requirements of modern households:

Space Standards

The Environmental Health minimum standards for space are as follows:

Sleeping Areas

1. With cooking facilities provided within the room:

Floor Area of Room	Maximum Occupancy
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less than 13m ² (140 ft ²)	None
13m ² (140 ft ²) or over	1 person
18m ² (194 ft ²) or over	2 persons

2. With cooking facilities provided separately:

Floor Area of Room	Maximum Occupancy
--------------------	-------------------

less than 8.4m ² (90ft ²)	None
8.4m ² (90ft ²) or over	1 person
11.2m ² (120ft ²) or over	2 persons

Standards are considered to be the minimum for sleeping/living areas and the above excludes provision for a bathroom and toilet.

Please note that for the purposes of these minimum standards:

1. All rooms must have a floor to ceiling height of at least 2.14m over not less than three quarters of the room area. Any area where the ceiling height is less than 1.53m shall be disregarded.
2. The floor area of any room shall be interpreted as the area enclosed by the internal faces of walls and doors, (see Appendix 1 for further guidance).

Cooking Areas

1. The space standard for separate kitchens, where provided, is 5.55m² (60 ft²) or more.

2. One kitchen per letting in a separate room is the preferred arrangement. Where this is not practicable a kitchen in the same room may be allowed, subject to the approval of the Environmental Health. In this case the room would have to have a minimum floor area of 13m² for one occupant.
3. If either of the above arrangements are not practicable it will be acceptable to provide communal kitchens. The minimum requirement is that one kitchen be provided per five occupants.

Other Facilities

Ideally exclusive use of WC and bathroom facilities should be provided. Where impractical, the following requirements will be acceptable:

1. The requirements below are considered to be a minimum. The Council's Environmental Health Officers seek to achieve higher standards where this is practicable.
 - a) one wash-hand basin per room - this requirement may be waived if the occupant has exclusive use of a kitchen;
 - b) one bath or shower per five persons; and
 - c) one WC per five persons - ideally this should be provided in a separate WC compartment. Where more than one WC is provided, half should be provided in a separate compartment.
2. Where communal toilet and bathroom are provided, access to such facilities should be directly off a communal corridor.

Fire Precautions and Means of Escape from Fire

All HMOs must be provided with a protected escape route and will usually require the provision of a fire alarm and detection system. Further advice may be obtained from the Environmental Health.

Registration

All HMOs in Forest Gate, Park and Upton wards must be registered with the Environmental Health Service. Registration includes payment of a fee and the requirement to provide certain information relating to the establishment; application forms may be obtained from the address below. The aim of the scheme is to establish acceptable minimum standards and improve conditions in HMO. The area of the registration scheme may be extended at a later date; please check with Environmental Health.

- General standard of fitness (Housing Act, 1985)
- Drainage

Environmental Health
Alice Billings House
2-12 West Ham Lane
Stratford E15 4SF

Telephone: 020 8430 3790
Fax: 020 8430 4434

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Building Regulations

You will need to comply with the relevant provisions of the Building Regulations. Further advice should be sought from the Council's Building Control Officers.

Newham Building Control

The Building Control Officers should be contacted for advice on the following matters:

- New partitions
- Noise transmission and effects
- Natural lighting and ventilation
- External staircases
- Provision of rooms within roof voids

WHO ELSE SHOULD I TALK TO?

For further advice on submitting a planning application, the suitability of premises for conversion to an HMO or for information on saturated streets, please contact:

Other building works and some changes of use require approval under the Building Regulations. For advice and information contact:

Environment Management Division
Development Control
Town Hall Annexe
Barking Road
East Ham E6 2RP

Telephone: 020 8430 2000 ext. 22282
Fax: 020 8430 2901

Building Control
Town Hall Annexe
Barking Road
East Ham E6 2RP

Telephone 020 8430 2000 ex 23300
Fax: 020 8430 2901

Advice and direction on the following matters can be obtained from the Council's Environmental Health HMO Team:

- Noise transmission and other public health nuisances
- Natural lighting and ventilation
- Artificial lighting and space heating where required
- Bathroom and kitchen facilities
- Fire precautions and means of escape from fire

Newham Refuse Disposal

For enquiries on refuse disposal matters please contact:

Environment Department
Central Depot
Folkestone Road
East Ham E6 4BX

Telephone: 020 8430 2000
Fax: 020 8552 9064

To access minicom facilities call: 020 8430 2000

APPENDIX 1

MEANS OF CALCULATING FLOOR AREA

The gross internal floor space of a dwelling house as originally constructed shall be interpreted as the space between the internal faces of the external/party wall. It includes all internal walls, partitions between rooms, columns, piers, chimney breasts, staircases, cupboards and stairwells, but excludes the following:

1. the thickness of any external/party wall;
2. any basement or loft which it can be shown originally formed part of the habitable accommodation within the dwelling;
3. any outhouse, shed, lean-to, conservatory, porch, covered passageway, or WC originally externally accessed;
4. any cupboard not directly accessed from within the original dwelling; and any area of floorspace which has a floor to ceiling height of less than 1.5m (5ft).

APPENDIX 2

This is a schedule of streets which already have more than 25% of single family houses converted into flats, bedsits, hostels, guest houses and/or hotels, or have an unexpired consent for change of use. No further conversions will therefore be allowed. This list will be reviewed as necessary.

Forest Gate Ward	
1. Avenue Road	13. Horace Road
2. Bignold Road	14. Idminston road
3. Capel Road	15 Latimer Road
4. Chestnut Avenue	16. Leonard Road
5. Clinton Road	17. Lorne Road
6. Cranmer Road	18. Macdonald Road
7. Dames Road	19. Odessa Road
8. Field Road	20. Ridley Road
9. Forest Lane	21. Sebert Road
10. Forest Road	22. Station Road
11. Godwin Road	23. Woodford Road
12. Gough Road	

Park Ward
1. Atherton Road
2. Carvarvon Road
3. Clova Road
4. Disraeli Road
5. Earlham Grove
6. Elm Road
7. Gower Road
8. Ham Park Road
9. Knox Road
10. Margery Park Rd.
11. Norwich Road
12. Reginald Road
13. Romford Road (Nos. 84-306;105-327)
14. Salisbury Road
15. Sprowston Road
16. Stork Road
17. Upton Lane (Nos. 2-242;1-91)
18. Vaughan Road
19. Warwick Road
20. Woodgrange Rd.

Plashet Ward
1. Cecil Road
2. Crescent Road
3. Dacre Road
4. East Road
5. Harold Road
6. Lawrence Road
7. Maud Road
8. Park Road
9. Plashet Road (Nos. 2-176)
10. Portway
11. Selwyn Road
12. Stopford Road
13. Stratford Road
14. Terrace Road

Upton Ward
1. Boleyn Road
2. Claremont Road
3. Elmhurst Road
4. Glenparke Road
5. Green Street (Nos. 12-304)
6. Grosvenor Road
7. Hampton Road
8. Ismailia Road
9. Neville Road
10. Osborne Road
11. Palmerston Road
12. Plashet Road (Nos. 1-247)
13. Romford Road (Nos. 331-471)
14. St. Anthony's Rd.
15. St. George's Ave.
16. St. George's Road
17. St. George's Squ.
18. Stukeley Road
19. Upton Avenue
20. Upton Lane (Nos. 129-375)
21. Upton Park Road
22. Vale Road
23. Windsor Road (Nos. 21-89;20-90)

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SPG/1

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