



Flat Conversions

June 2001



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 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.

These Guidance Notes:

- Identify the relevant UDP policy; (for a full statement of the policy, the UDP itself should be consulted)
- Give planning guidance on design and standards;
- Provide 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 development/design principles to be aimed for.

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

Most of the design principles will be well known to architects and others, who can use the document as a checklist.

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 UDP itself, and you are encouraged to discuss your proposals with planning staff before you make a formal planning application.

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

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In accordance with PPG 12 'Development Plans' the Council issued a draft version of this document for public consultation between 27th November 2000 and 22nd January 2001. No objections of a material nature were received. The final version of the document was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 2nd April 2001.

FLAT CONVERSIONS

Background

It is recognised by the Council that flat conversions can provide an important contribution to Newham's housing stock, and represent a valuable source of housing to the growing number of small households.

Planning Requirements

The main objectives of the UDP policy framework are:

- to retain an adequate stock of small family housing;
- to provide flats of acceptable standard, which are suited to the needs of the growing number of small households;
- to protect the small number of remaining houses with 4 or more bedrooms for use as single dwelling houses, in order to cater for the needs of large households and maintain choice of housing;
- to prevent the creation of unsatisfactory levels of on-street car parking and congestion; and
- to prevent the over-concentration of flat conversions within any one area.

Planning permission will be required if you intend to:

- change the use of a single dwelling into self-contained flats; and

- undertake any external building works, including extensions, when converting a property into flats.

UDP Policies

The main UDP policies are H20 and H21. Others are also relevant; you should check with a planning officer for further details. (see the 'Who Else Should I Talk To?' section below)

Assessing Your Application

Each application will be assessed on its own merits. However, the following matters will be taken account by the Council:

a) For a property to be subdivided into flats, it should:

- be 120m² or larger (see Appendix 1 for method of calculating floorspace).
- not be in a specified street that has already had more than 25% of the properties converted into flats (see Appendix 3); and
- have off-street car parking available, or be within an area that has capacity on-street. (see also section 'h' below)

b) For the internal layout:

- each new unit must not be less than 45m² in area (see Appendix 2 for method of calculating floorspace) unless:
 - the unit is necessary to complete an overall conversion scheme, or
 - the scheme is undertaken by a recognised Housing Association providing accommodation for special needs 1-person units. Such units would have a combined living and sleeping area, and separate bathroom and kitchen.
- each unit must be self-contained, with its own separate entrance.
- noise-sensitive rooms e.g. bedrooms should be kept away from noise sources by, for example:
 - stacking rooms of similar use above each other;

- not placing noisy and noise-sensitive rooms above, below or beside each other; and

- not placing bedrooms beside busy roads.

- basement rooms, because of their limited outlook, should be combined with the ground floor rooms, to create one unit.

- all habitable rooms and kitchens should have adequate natural light.

- balconies and roof terraces should be provided only if they do not overlook the private garden areas or windows of surrounding properties (see SPG 'Residential Planning Guidelines' for details).

c) For the external layout:

- external stairs should be avoided, as they cause daylighting and privacy problems, and create a poor appearance.
- family units, i.e. those with 2 or more bedrooms, should have direct access to a garden; this should ideally be:
 - at the rear;
 - private rather than communal;
 - an integral part of the flat; and
 - be seen to be the maintenance responsibility of a specific unit.
- Gardens should not be subdivided unless more than 1 flat can have direct access to the garden plot for maintenance.

d) Loft extensions should:

- not exceed the existing height of the building;
- not have a dominating appearance;
- not diminish the natural lighting and ventilation of the adjoining property;
- have dormers of modest size, positioned to match the existing window pattern; and
- alter the street elevation as little as possible.

- e) Extensions should:
- respect the daylighting and privacy to existing windows in the adjoining properties; and
 - be built to match the external materials of the existing building.
- f) Front elevations should:
- retain and restore original features, such as sash windows, stucco, plasterwork, stock bricks, slate roofs, front bays, porch and front door designs, and chimney stacks;
 - not have rendering, painted brickwork, pebble-dashing, or the installation of inappropriate windows, which disturb the harmony of the street scene;
 - not have external pipework, which instead should either be located internally, or be placed on to a rear elevation; and
 - not have obtrusive external flues or vents.
- g) Works in Conservation Areas should, in addition to the above:
- preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area;
 - respect the street scale and the local quality of detailing and materials, and contribute positively to the overall design quality of the area; and
 - be accompanied by more detailed drawings and supporting information at the planning application stage.
- h) Parking
- Cars
 - 1 off-street space for each additional residential unit created, except where the Council considers that local road capacity is sufficient to reasonably accommodate on-street parking. Road capacity will be assessed by the Council as applications are submitted.
 - Where communal car parking is provided:
 - for Cycles
 - a minimum of 1 secure space per 4 units, plus, for visitors, 1 space per 10 units
 - for Motorcycles
 - a minimum of 1 secure space per 10 units
 - for Orange/Blue Badge holders
 - a minimum of 6% of spaces.
- i) Access
- The Council supports a fully accessible environment. Flat conversions should be accessible in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance, 'Access for All', Part M of the Building Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act as appropriate.
- j) Minimum room sizes for the various sizes of flats are as follows: (figures are in m²)
- | No of people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Working Kitchen | - | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| Dining Kitchen | - | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 |
| Living | - | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Living/dining | - | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| First bedroom | - | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Other double bedrooms | - | - | - | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Single bedrooms | - | - | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 |
| Floor Area of Dwelling | 30 | 45 | 57 | 70 | 80 | 86 |
- k) Services Within Dwellings
- A separate WC and bathroom should be provided for units of 2 bedrooms or more.
 - Placing the new pipework within ducts or cupboards in the new accommodation, (rather than on external walls) improves the overall appearance of the flats, and reduces cold weather problems. This is particularly important when carrying out works in Conservation Areas.

l) Noise

Habitable rooms exposed to noise from roads, railway or business uses should have suitable sound insulation, multiple glazing or mechanical ventilation.

The construction of party floors, party walls and new partitions will have an important role in controlling noise.

It includes:

- the space between the internal faces of the external and party walls; and
- all internal walls, partitions between rooms, columns, piers, chimney breasts, staircases and stairwells.

It excludes:

m) Refuse collection

for dustbin stores:

- provide space for one bin per flat;
- make site unobtrusive and screened both from public view and from within the flats;
- place clear of the flats' windows, to minimise smell;
- locate within 23m of the street, when measured along paths without steps, and suitable for wheeling the bin;
- internal store dimensions should be 600 mm wide, 750mm deep, and 1200 mm high with a flush entrance; and
- they should be integral to the overall design of the front garden area, unless the bins are stored at the rear or side of the property.

- the thickness of any external/party wall;
- any basement or loft which does not form part of the habitable accommodation within the dwelling;
- any outhouse, shed, lean-to, conserv-atory, porch, covered passageway, or WC externally accessed;
- any cupboard not directly accessed from within the original dwelling; and
- any area of floorspace that has a floor-to-ceiling height of less than 1.5m.

Appendix 2:

For the purposes of this policy, the floor area of a proposed flat will include:

- all floorspace on one or more floors enclosed, but not occupied by, the perimeter walls of the unit; and
- the area occupied by all walls and partitions between rooms, columns, piers, chimney breasts, staircases and stairwells, circulation space and storage space accessed directly from the flat.

n) Meter boxes must be:

- accessible and controllable by each flat occupant;
- accessible to the meter reader, via a path or hard surfaced area at the front of the flats, without having to enter them; and
- sited and painted inconspicuously, incorporated into the overall design, and built into the structure rather than being an applied box.

It excludes:

- any common entrances and stairways shared with other flats;
- any storage space or other areas not accessed directly from the flat;
- any lofts or cellars not providing habitable accommodation; and
- any area of the floor space which has a floor-to-ceiling height of less than 1.5m.

Appendix 1:

For the purposes of this policy, the method of calculating the internal floor space of the dwelling house as originally constructed is as follows:

Appendix 3:

Streets which have had more than 25% of single family dwellings converted into flats, and which therefore are not suitable for additional conversions of this type of property:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Forest Gate Ward | (Nos. 2-242;1-91) |
| 1. Avenue Road | 18. Vaughan Road |
| 2. Bignold Road | 19. Warwick Road |
| 3. Capel Road | 20. Woodgrange Rd. |
| 4. Chestnut Avenue | Plashet Ward |
| 5. Clinton Road | 1. Cecil Road |
| 6. Cranmer Road | 2. Crescent Road |
| 7. Dames Road | 3. Dacre Road |
| 8. Field Road | 4. East Road |
| 9. Forest Lane | 5. Harold Road |
| 10. Forest Road | 6. Lawrence Road |
| 11. Godwin Road | 7. Maud Road |
| 12. Gough Road | 8. Park Road |
| 13. Horace Road | 9. Plashet Road |
| 14. Idminston road | (Nos. 2-176) |
| 15. Latimer Road | 10. Portway |
| 16. Leonard Road | 11. Selwyn Road |
| 17. Lorne Road | 12. Stopford Road |
| 18. Macdonald Road | 13. Stratford Road |
| 19. Odessa Road | 14. Terrace Road |
| 20. Ridley Road | Upton Ward |
| 21. Sebert Road | 1. Boleyn Road |
| 22. Station Road | 2. Claremont Road |
| 23. Woodford Road | 3. Elmhurst Road |
| Park Ward | 4. Glenparke Road |
| 1. Atherton Road | 5. Green Street |
| 2. Carvarvon Road | (Nos. 12-304) |
| 3. Clova Road | 6. Grosvenor Road |
| 4. Disraeli Road | 7. Hampton Road |
| 5. Earlham Grove | 8. Ismailia Road |
| 6. Elm Road | 9. Neville Road |
| 7. Gower Road | 10. Osborne Road |
| 8. Ham Park Road | 11. Palmerston Road |
| 9. Knox Road | 12. Plashet Road |
| 10. Margery Park Rd. | (Nos. 1-247) |
| 11. Norwich Road | 13. Romford Road |
| 12. Reginald Road | (Nos. 331-471) |
| 13. Romford Road | 14. St. Anthony's Rd. |
| (Nos. 84-306;105-327) | 15. St. George's Ave. |
| 14. Salisbury Road | 16. St. Georges Road |
| 15. Sprowston Road | 17. St. Georges Square |
| 16. Stork Road | 18. Stukeley Road |
| 17. Upton Lane | 19. Upton Avenue |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 20. Upton Lane | 22. Vale Road |
| (Nos. 129-375) | 23. Windsor Road |
| 21. Upton Park Road | (Nos. 21-89;20-90) |

Who Else Should I Talk To?

For advice on noise and other nuisance, health and safety at work of employees who may use the building's amenities, means of escape in case of fire and other fire precautions in existing flat conversions and hostels, hotels and buildings used for bed and breakfast purposes, contact:

Environmental Health

Environmental Health
Alice Billings House, 2-12 West Ham Lane,
Stratford, E15 4SF
Telephone: 020 8430 3790

Building Control

New buildings and conversions usually require approval under the Building Regulations. Building Control Officers will be able to advise you on the implications of any structural alterations, drainage work, etc. For further information and advice contact:

Building Control
Town Hall Annexe, Barking Road,
East Ham, E6 2RP
Telephone: 020 8430 2000
ex. 23300/23325

Development Control

For advice on planning applications, please contact:

Development Control
Town Hall Annexe, Barking Road,
East Ham, E6 2RP
Telephone: 020 8430 2000
(ask for the Development Control Duty Officer)

For advice on crime prevention matters please contact:

Metropolitan Police Service

Crime Prevention Officer
Plaistow police Station
444 Barking Road
Plaistow, E13 8HJ
Telephone: 020 7275 5857/5848



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