

Wandsworth Council
Borough Planner's Service

Guidelines for Housing Development

new build – house conversions – change of use

Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan
non-statutory supplementary planning guidance

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Introduction

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

The Borough Planner's Service has produced a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs) designed to assist you in applying for planning permission.

This guidance note deals with conversion schemes, extensions, changes of use and new build proposals for housing. These applications should have regard to the following guidelines which will be a material consideration in determining applications in conjunction with the relevant policies in the UDP. The relevant policies are referred to in the guidelines, but for a full statement of the policy, the UDP itself should be consulted.

General Considerations

Safety and Security

Access ways, parking areas, public spaces and the external environment generally should be designed in such a way as to create a safe and secure environment and to minimise the opportunities for crime, in line with the Council's safety and security design guidelines.

The Council does not support a "fortress" approach to these issues relying on measures such as security gates and shutters. It considers that crime prevention and security objectives can be achieved in a variety of ways. These include encouraging appropriate mixes of uses, designing out "dead areas", ensuring that public areas are overlooked, that there is a clear distinction between public and private areas, and that public accesses and entrances front public areas, and providing clear signage and good quality lighting.

Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities

The needs of people with disabilities should be considered as an integral part of the design process. Guidelines covering access around the external environment, to and within new/refurbished buildings and the design of facilities such as parking spaces and sanitary conveniences are available from the Borough Planner's Service. The Council will encourage new build housing development to be designed so as to allow for wheelchair access to the ground floor of new buildings. The Building Regulations apply to new housing as well as non-domestic buildings.

General Considerations

Floorspace Guidelines for New Build, House Conversions and Change of Use

Each dwelling should be adequate for the family or household which is likely to occupy it. All conversion schemes and new dwellings provided through change of use or extensions should be fully self contained. The guidelines are as follows:-

Dwelling Size

Size (bedspace)	1 bed space	2 bed space	3 bed space	4 bed space	5 bed space	6 bed space
Area (sq. metres)	30	45	57	60	79	86

Rooms (sq. metres)

Room Description	1 bed space	2 bed space	3 bed space	4 bed space	5 bed space	6 bed space
Main Bedroom	8.4	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Other Double Bedrooms	–	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2
Single Room	–	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Dining Kitchen	8.4	9.3	11.2	11.2	12.1	13.0
Living Room (in dwelling with separate dining kitchen)	11.2	12.1	13.0	13.9	14.9	15.8
Kitchen	5.6	5.6	5.6	7.4	7.4	7.4
Living Room (in dwelling without separate dining kitchen)	13.0	13.0	14.9	15.8	17.7	18.6

New Build

Daylight and Sunlight

In new developments adequate levels of daylight and sunlight should be achieved to meet Department of Environment's daylight and sunlight standards specified in "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight", produced by the Building Research Establishment, 1991. Developments should also provide a satisfactory outlook.

Amenity Space

The nature and scale of amenity space should be appropriate to the location of the development and the character of the area within which it is situated. Generally this should mean that a minimum of 40 sq. metres of space per family sized dwelling (four bedspaces or more) and 20 sq. metres for non-family accommodation, live/work schemes and in the Wandsworth Thames Policy Area, suitable for amenity use should be provided. Access ways, service and parking areas, and any front gardens or other incidental or awkwardly shaped spaces, will be excluded from the calculation. Generally, this level of provision will also apply to change of use except in the case of small schemes where this is not practicable and an otherwise satisfactory standard of amenity can be achieved.

Suitably sized balconies (minimum of 10 sq. Metres), terraces and roof gardens may be provided as an appropriate form of amenity space. In addition where the development is for non-family accommodation, the provision of other amenities, such as indoor leisure facilities for use by residents, may be appropriate and could offset the total amenity space required. The proximity of public parks, riverside walks and other public open spaces may contribute to the setting of a development but are not substitutes for private amenity space, and as such cannot be considered as part of the calculation of amenity space to be provided.

Privacy

Normally there should be a minimum of 20 metres between directly facing habitable rooms, except at ground level where adequate screening is provided. (This applies both within a new development and in relation to other existing housing).

New Build

Landscaping

Landscaping, tree planting and appropriate surfacing materials should be provided in character with the area and the setting of the site.

Access and Parking

In new developments and proposals involving changes of use a maximum of one off-street parking space for each dwelling should be provided. Additional provision of one space per 5 dwellings should be provided as visitors' spaces. A higher proportion may be appropriate for larger properties (4 bedrooms or more), but should not exceed more than 1.5 spaces per dwelling in any development.

Lower levels of provision, including car-free housing (without any off-street parking) may be justified in areas well served by public transport, particularly for non-family accommodation, live/work accommodation, dual/interchangeable business/housing use and housing for special needs. It may also be acceptable in situations where provision is impracticable without prejudicing other policies in the Plan.

The size and layout of each parking space or garage should be adequate to enable a car to be parked safely and conveniently. Parking bays should be 4.8 metres long by 2.4 metres wide, with a 6 metre aisle for access and manoeuvring. Parking spaces for people with disabilities should be on the level and 3.6 metres wide.

Any shared parking areas must be close to the dwelling they serve and properly designed and laid out to create a safe and secure environment for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst not dominating the development. Parking spaces should not immediately abut windows of living accommodation. There should be an adequate physical separation to minimise the effects of car fumes and disturbance on living accommodation. Car parking should not become a dominant feature of a development. Where new developments include new roads, the contribution that on-street parking spaces can make to provision will also be taken into account.

New Build

Vehicle access routes should be a minimum of 6 metres unobstructed width to provide adequate vehicle manoeuvring space. Vehicle access to refuse storage areas will need to allow refuse collection vehicles to enter and leave in a forward direction. The maximum distance from a stationary refuse vehicle to a paladin (communal refuse bin) should be 10 metres and 25 metres to an individual domestic bin.

Density

Housing development should relate satisfactorily to its surroundings and the character of the area, and meet the Council's policies on design, space and amenity.

Whilst density will be taken into account in any development proposal, other factors such as the acceptability of the layout, outlook and design will take precedence, particularly on small sites, in mixed developments, conversions and extensions.

Subject to these considerations a density range of 170-210 habitable rooms per hectare (hrph) calculated on the basis of net site area, will normally be acceptable outside of the Wandsworth Thames Policy Area. Within the Wandsworth Thames Policy Area, plot ratio is used with a maximum of 2:1. Residential use should not exceed 35% of floorspace within the Nine Elms Riverside and 70% elsewhere in the Wandsworth Thames Policy Area. Higher density housing may be appropriate subject to certain circumstances such as the characteristics of the site and nature of development, for predominantly non-family housing and in areas well served by public transport.

Proposals are treated flexibly, taking into account the individual circumstances of each case. Design and general building form considerations, the type of accommodation being provided, provision of underground parking and alternative amenity provision, the character of the area, and achieving a viable mixed development, are all factors that can help to make such proposals acceptable. Similarly the considerations that are appropriate for change of use proposals (e.g. former school buildings or offices) can be different from those applying to development proposals within or adjacent to established residential areas.

House Conversions and Change of Use

Arrangement of Rooms and Sound Insulation

In the case of conversions and change of use schemes the internal layout of flats should provide satisfactory circulation space. Each habitable room, bathroom and toilet should have access to the general circulation passage leading to the exit, with a landing between entrance doors and the staircases. Habitable rooms should have adequate daylight. As far as possible, rooms in similar use should be placed vertically above one another and side by side. Internal bathrooms must have some form of internal mechanical ventilation. Wherever possible kitchens and bathrooms should not be located on front elevations. Adequate soundproofing should be installed in all conversions and changes of use.

Visual Privacy, Outlook and Amenity Space

Visual privacy and personal security must be safeguarded and undue overlooking of ground floor accommodation or neighbouring properties from extensions, roof terraces or external staircases avoided. Screening, sensitive design or planting schemes will be sought where appropriate. The outlook from converted dwellings should be kept as open as possible and improved where appropriate by simple landscaping. Shared use of existing large gardens will be acceptable provided that visual privacy is protected. Gardens below a minimum size of 36 sq. metres should not be sub-divided.

Changes of use should include the provision of a minimum of 40 sq. metres of space suitable for amenity use per family sized dwelling (4 bedspaces or more) and 20 sq. metres for non-family sized accommodation.

Car Parking Requirements for House Conversions

Off-street car parking is only required where additional units are created through extensions in accordance with the car parking standards for new build housing, or in house conversion restraint areas.

Car Parking Requirements for Change of Use

The access and parking standards for new build housing will apply. In situations where car parking is not practicable, such as accommodation above shops in Town or Local Centres and on main roads, then car parking will not generally be required.

Extensions

General considerations

The character of the existing building should be reflected in any extension, with regard to design, proportions and materials. Extensions should not be so large as to dominate the existing building. The amenity of adjoining occupiers should be protected, with visual intrusion minimised where possible. The amenity of existing rooms in the building should also be unaffected by extensions, with regard to daylight and ventilation. Extensions covering more than half the garden space are unlikely to be acceptable.

Roof Extensions

These are not generally appropriate at the front of the house, unless they can be kept well back behind an existing parapet. Dormers should be placed well away from eaves and flank or party walls and be below and not raise the height of the ridge. Roof terraces should not cause undue loss of privacy where they overlook neighbouring properties.

Alterations to the Front of Properties

Extensions or free-standing structures in front of houses will generally not be acceptable. The Council has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance on Basements. In general where lightwells are excavated at the front of houses to provide light to basements, at least half the front garden depth should remain. New habitable rooms in basements should not be created in areas subject to flooding. Hardstandings should not dominate front gardens or detract from the character or the appearance of conservation areas.

Explanation of Terms and Abbreviations

Density

The number of habitable rooms per hectare (hrph). Where residential and non-residential uses are combined in the same building, residential density is calculated on the residual area after subtracting half the gross non-residential floorspace from the overall site area (i.e. after subtracting the area required to accommodate the non-residential floorspace at the normal maximum plot ratio of 2:1).

Habitable Rooms

Habitable rooms are living rooms, (including living/dining spaces) And bedrooms. Large rooms (over 32 sq. metres) and rooms that could reasonably be sub-divided into two rooms are also counted as two habitable rooms for the purposes of this calculation. Kitchens greater than 13 sq. metres are also counted. Smaller kitchens, bathrooms and WC's are excluded.

Gross floorspace

The gross floor area of a building measured on the overall dimensions of each floor, and including the thickness of internal and external walls, stairs and lift shafts, corridors, halls and basements. Parking and loading/unloading areas (including those underground) are generally excluded.

Habitable floorspace

All habitable rooms as well as kitchens, bathrooms and W.C's, halls, landings and other circulation space (including the horizontal area occupied by staircases – counted once for each flight). Cellars and loft space that have not been rendered habitable are excluded. Only that habitable floorspace which is currently, or has previously been, occupied is counted for the purpose of determining size thresholds in the house conversion policies.

Explanation of Terms and Abbreviations

Plot Ratio

The ratio of gross floorspace to site area.

Site Area

The net area of a site, excluding any parts of adjoining streets.

Previously Developed Land (Brownfield Land)

Government defines brownfield land in Government Policy on Housing (PPG3, March 2000) Annex C as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Parks, recreation grounds or allotments are not included.

English

If you have problems understanding this in English please contact

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Bengali

এই লিফলেটটি বুঝতে অসুবিধা হলে
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Hindi

यदि आपको इसे अंग्रेजी में समझने में
कठिनाई होती है, तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें:

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Punjabi

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Gujarati

જો આને અંગ્રેજીમાં સમજવી તમારા માટે
મુશ્કેલ છે, તો મહેરબાની કરી સંપર્ક
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Urdu

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Technical Services Department



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