



# Flat Conversions

## Design Guide

### The Woodgrange Conservation Area.

The Woodgrange Estate was designated a Conservation Area in 1976 with the aim of preserving and enhancing its special character and appearance. More detailed planning controls operate in the area, than elsewhere, to help achieve this.

### What requires planning permission?

Planning permission is required for both internal and external works that will turn existing residential accommodation into separate self-contained units and for works that will affect the external appearance of the property.

This guide gives general advice on the type of development that is likely to gain permission. However, as it cannot cover every circumstance, you are strongly advised to seek advice on your individual proposal from the Council's Development Control Officers before getting plans drawn up.

If you do works without planning permission the Council can take legal action, as necessary, to get you to put things right at your own expense. You may also be taken to court and fined.

### Other Council consents.

You will also need to satisfy other regulations, principally under the Building Regulations and Housing Acts.

### Council policy

Conversion of suitable larger properties will be allowed subject to policies H19 and H20 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan, and to any other restrictions the Council may impose in its duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area. This includes restricting front garden parking to one space only (see Front Gardens and Car Parking Design Sheet for details).

Supplementary Planning Guidance "Flat Conversions" should be referred to by applicants. The advice contained in that Note applies to all conversions in Newham subject to any variation required to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

Although flat conversions provide lower-cost housing for the growing number of smaller households it is important that their impact on the area's character and appearance is closely controlled. Detrimental changes will be opposed and enhancements may well be required to make the overall impact of a scheme acceptable.

### Size of Units

Each new unit should be at least 45 m<sup>2</sup> (roughly 484 ft<sup>2</sup>) in area. Minimum room sizes are shown in the table over the page. Each flat must be self-contained with its own separate entrance. This must be achieved behind the original front door.

The most acceptable schemes usually have one unit per floor with any annexe as a third unit. More units are normally unacceptable.

**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  | 1   |
| Single bedrooms        | -  | -  | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 |
| Floor Area of Dwelling | 30 | 45 | 57  | 70  | 80  | 8   |

**Car parking**

Irrespective of the number of units, only one car parking space will be allowed in the garden of any house in the Woodgrange Estate. This applies even if the annexe is to become a separate unit. Car parking was not part of the original estate design and it often involves a loss of greenery and the disruption of the original continuity of walls and green spaces. To be acceptable any hardstandings must be restricted in size and designed and positioned to blend in with the street scene. See the design sheet on "Car Parking" for detailed requirements.



*Above and right: Conversions involving the sub-division of front gardens and the laying out of more than one car parking space are no longer acceptable.*



*left: Car parking will be limited to one space and be laid out in accordance with the advice in the design sheet on Car Parking. It should be as unobtrusive as possible and the erection of a traditional front wall may be required.*



*Planning controls will be used to prevent the destruction of the character and integrity of any converted property. This photo taken in another Corbett estate in Ilford shows what can occur without these controls.*

### Front gardens and facades

Front gardens must not be subdivided. A common treatment of the facade and the garden is required to ensure that any annexe is not visually detached from the main house of which it is historically a part.

### Bins

If dustbins have to be kept in front gardens, they should be grouped together in an unobtrusive position within easy access of the street for collection. Site on a paved surface and screen using shrubs.



*Left: Bin stores can be ugly and obtrusive. Older ones are no longer large enough for the new wheelie bins and should be removed.*

*Below: Wheelie bins should be stored out of sight, for example behind a hedge or other shrubs. Bin stores are not acceptable.*

### Restoration works

Restoration of the property will be required as part of any permission, along with a high standard of design and finishes. Developers may, for example, be required to reinstate missing paths, hedges and original gates and railings.



### Entrances

All separate entrances must be provided behind the original doorway. Original doors must be retained. As projecting porches, front extensions and the infilling of recessed porches are not acceptable, layout and internal lobbies

should be used to reduce draughts, increase privacy and provide space for "hall uses".



*Left: The main front door must be retained and any separate entrances provided internally.*



*Right: Alterations to the doorway are no longer acceptable.*

### Dormers and roof-lights

Dormers are not allowed and roof lights are restricted to slopes not seen from the highway. Their extent must not dominate the roofscape.

### Flues

External balanced flues and vents should not be located on facades that can be seen from the street. Pipework should be run inside the building wherever possible.

### Rear gardens

Flats intended for families should have access to a garden. Original brick walls in rear gardens must be retained. This will help improve sound insulation and privacy as well as appearance. Whilst it may be necessary to demarcate individual spaces within the rear garden, the visual effect of one garden should be retained by using only low means of enclosure such as small hedges or open timber fences under one metre high (39 ins). Individual sheds should be kept small for similar reasons. External staircases are unacceptable.

### Meter boxes

Meter boxes should preferably be placed inside the property. If outside they must be of the semi-concealed type, or on side walls not visible, but accessible from, the front.

*Meters should preferably be inside the property. Outside the semi-concealed type should be used. White boxes on the front walls or porches are not acceptable*



## Layout of flats

Internal arrangements that require changes to original external features should be avoided. Examples include the bricking up of windows, raising of cills or the making of new openings in elevations. Also avoid internal features (e.g. partitioning) which have a detrimental affect on the external appearance of the property.

The layout should make economical use of space, provide adequate privacy and minimise disturbance to neighbours. Each flat should be designed so that all habitable rooms have direct access from a general circulation area. Similar uses e.g. living spaces and bedrooms, should be stacked above each other on each floor to reduce noise disturbance between units.

## Loft conversions

Loft conversions are generally considered unsuitable for conversion and the necessity for windows and ventilation makes them particularly inappropriate in Woodgrange.

## Extensions

*Rear Extensions* are limited to: two thirds of the width of a double fronted house; a small extension to an annexe; an extension to the rear of the back addition of a terraced house. One storey side additions may also be acceptable to an end of terrace house.

*Side Extensions* In certain circumstances a first floor addition to an existing annexe may be allowed where the property is of the type that, elsewhere on the estate, generally has a two-storey annexe.

Applicants should read the [Extensions and Conservatories Design Guide](#) for further essential policy and design advice.