



CONVERSION OF PROPERTIES TO FLATS

Introduction

1.1 The Council has operated policies relating to flat conversions since the 1960s. The advice has been revised on numerous occasions since. The following guidance was adopted by the Council on 27 July 1999 after public consultation. Its contents will be used as a material consideration in addition to any Local Plan policies when the Local Planning Authority considers applications for the conversion of properties to flats.

1.2 For the purposes of this supplementary planning guidance note, a flat is defined as any unit of self-contained accommodation, excluding a dwellinghouse. In most cases it will consist of a lounge, kitchen, bathroom and one or more bedrooms. There may, however, be combined uses of rooms, for example kitchen/lounge or living/sleeping areas. It should be noted that this guidance does not apply to houses in multiple occupation or hostels.

Benefits

2.1 The benefits of the conversion of properties to flats:

- i) Makes good use of buildings which may otherwise be past their best.
- ii) Can assist in urban regeneration and reduce the need to develop green field sites and open spaces.
- iii) Promotes a sustainable form of development by:
 - n providing new accommodation within the existing urban area which can be well related to public transport, places of work, schools, shops, etc., thereby reducing the need to travel;
 - n reducing the demand for new building materials that would occur if the building were demolished and a replacement erected.

Problems

3.1 The problems with flats conversions are that, they can:

- n cause greater congestion from increased number of cars;
- n result in overlooking;
- n change the character of an area;

- n increase noise and general disturbance to neighbouring properties.

Location

4.1 Whilst the principle of flat conversions is appropriate in most parts of the town, some areas are more suitable than others. Flat conversions offer an opportunity to extend the life of older properties. Many larger Victorian and Edwardian properties, in particular, lend themselves to conversion. A lot of this type of property was built for large families with domestic servants. Such patterns of domestic life no longer apply and converting the property into a number of smaller units may be a practical way of reusing the building. On the other hand, much post-war housing development is still fit for its original purpose. Modern housing also tends to be smaller and does not lend itself to conversion in the way older properties do.

4.2 Regard will need to be given to the character of the area in which the conversion is proposed. Conversion will lead to an intensification of residential use – more households, more people, more comings and goings, more cars. The level of conversion should, therefore, reflect the character of the area, for example a proposal for five or six flats is unlikely to be acceptable in an area where two or three flats is the norm, as it will erode the character of the area.

4.3 Consideration of the impact of the proposal on the character of the area will be even more important where the site lies in a conservation area. When considering an application in a conservation area the local planning authority will grant permission only if the scheme will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. The effect of the proposal on the surroundings therefore becomes even more critical.

4.4 There may be scope, however, for flat conversions to take place in more modern commercial buildings. Purpose-built office blocks from the 1960s and '70s may no longer be suited to modern office requirements and conversion to residential use offers a development opportunity. There may, therefore, be potential for some conversion to take place outside the areas the Local Planning Authority wishes to retain for future office development (these areas will be identified in the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan).

- 4.5 Further opportunities for flat conversions may be found above ground floor in commercial areas. Many shops and commercial premises have under-utilised space above ground floor level. This could be brought into beneficial residential use.
- 4.6 Buildings in the Town's shopping and commercial areas commonly occupy most of their site. Sub-dividing the property to provide additional flats would normally require an increase in car parking provision. Very often this is not physically possible. The location of these properties, however, means they are usually situated on public transport routes. In this situation the normal requirements relating to car parking for residential conversions will be relaxed.



Type of Property

- 5.1 There are certain types of property that are well suited to sub-division or conversion to flats: there are others where it would be inappropriate. For example, where a property is currently used as a single dwelling and is one of a pair of semi-detached properties, the upstairs habitable rooms are generally used as bedrooms. When a flat conversion takes place some of the former bedrooms will be used as a lounge and kitchen. Different patterns of activity take place during different times of the day. Normal activities associated with day to day living, such as watching television or listening to music can be annoying to neighbours if sound leaks from one property to another. Whilst measures can be introduced during the conversion process to cut down the amount of noise transmission, it is difficult to eliminate it altogether. Therefore, only detached properties will be considered as suitable candidates for conversion. An exception may be made where adjoining properties are already in flats.
- 5.2 Thought should also be given when converting a property to ensure that the layout

of flats that are one above the other is such that rooms with similar functions are located above one another, as this can help reduce the potential for disturbance.

Consideration for Neighbours and the Local Environment

- 6.1 The effect of the proposal on its surroundings will always be an important consideration.
- 6.2 It is important that any proposed conversion should not detract from the amenities of neighbouring residents to a materially greater extent than it would if the property were retained in its original use. Problems can arise where living rooms or kitchens are created at upper floor level which overlook neighbouring properties. If the original use of these rooms were as bedrooms there is a much greater chance that the new use will mean they are occupied during daytime. Consideration should therefore be given to ensuring the layout of the conversion safeguards adjacent private areas such as back gardens by overlooking more public areas such as the street.
- 6.3 A flat conversion will result in more households occupying the building. More often than not, there will be an increase in car ownership. If provision is not made on site, on-street parking may result in effectively reducing the width of the carriageway by having cars parked on both sides of the road.
- 6.4 Careful consideration however, needs to be given when proposing on-site parking. The character or appearance of the area in which the conversion is located needs to be taken into account. If a proposal results in the loss of most of the garden area in order to accommodate the necessary parking requirements and results in a development out of keeping with its neighbours, it is a likely indication that the level of sub-division proposed is too intense. This would indicate a reduced number of units would probably be more acceptable.
- 6.5 The proposed car parking layout needs to be given careful consideration. A conversion may result in parking spaces being located adjacent to windows of the ground floor units. This is unlikely to be a problem where the parking space belongs to the flat but could cause disturbance if the parking space belongs to a different flat and espe-

cially if it is situated outside a bedroom.

- 6.6 Parking areas in front gardens may be acceptable if they can be adequately landscaped. A proposal that results in the removal of the front boundary wall or hedge and lays the front garden area down as hardstanding is unlikely to be acceptable. It results in an erosion of the streetscape and may present a hazard to pedestrians and other road users.
- 6.7 It is important to ensure that independent access can be maintained to each flat's parking area. Therefore, proposals which incorporate tandem parking (one space behind another) will not be acceptable.
- 6.8 Additional criteria may be required for flats with direct access onto Primary, County, District or Local Distributor routes in order not to compromise highway safety.



Above; before conversion.

Below; now a smart set of flats.





APPENDIX 1: Parking Guidelines

| | curtilage | Nearby Unassigned |
|--|-----------|-------------------|
| Flats with floorspace less than 90 sq.m | 1 | 0.5 |
| Flats with floorspace greater than 90 sq.m | 1 | 1 |

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| Flats in the Town Centre and Lansdowne Parking Restraint Areas: | 1 space per flat + 1 space per 3 flats for visitors |
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APPENDIX 2: List of Primary, County, District and Local Distributor Roads where additional highway criteria may be required.

County Primary Roads

Ringwood Road (Borough Boundary to Wallisdown Road)

Wessex Way (A35/A338) (Borough Boundary at County Gates to Cooper Dean Roundabout)

Ringwood - Bournemouth Spur Road (Cooper Dean Roundabout to Borough Boundary at Blackwater)

County Distributor Roads

Alma Road (A3049)

Ashley Road (A3049)

Bath Road

Boundary Road (A347)

Castle Lane East (A3060)

Castle Lane West (A3060)

Cambridge Road (Between Wessex Way and Poole Road)

Christchurch Road (A35) (Lansdowne to Palmerston Road and Ashley Road to Iford Bridge)

Centenary Way

Durley Chine Road (Between Poole Road and Hahnemann Road)

Durley Road South

Ensbury Park Gyrotory

Exeter Road (Between Priory Road and Bath Road)

Holdenhurst Road (A3049) (Richmond Park Road to Ashley Road and The Lansdowne to St Paul's Road)

Lansdowne Road (B3064)

Magna Road (A341)

New Road (A347)

Palmerston Road (Christchurch Road to Centenary Way)

Priory Road

Redhill Avenue (A347)

Richmond Park Road (A3049)

St Paul's Road

St Swithun's Road South

Talbot Avenue (A347)

Talbot Road (A3049)

Wallisdown Road

West Cliff Road (Between Durley Road South and Priory Road)

Whitelegg Way (Northbourne) (A347)

Wimborne Road (A341) (Bear Cross to Northbourne Roundabout, Redhill Avenue to Castle Lane West and Talbot Avenue to Richmond Hill)

District Distributor Roads

Alum Chine Road (West Cliff Road to Alumhurst Road)

Beechwood Avenue

Belle Vue Road

Bengal Road

Boscombe Spa Road (Christchurch Road to Owls Road)

Branksome Wood Road (Glenferness Avenue to Leven Avenue)

Castle Road

Charminster Avenue (Gresham Road to Charminster Road)

Charminster Road
 Columbia Road
 Ensbury Park Road
 Glenferness Avenue
 Gresham Road (Charminster Avenue to Ripon Road)
 Holdenhurst Road (St Paul's Road to Richmond Park Road)
 Kinson Road
 Owls Road
 Percy Road
 Pine Road
 Poole Lane (Ringwood Road to Turbary Park Avenue)
 Poole Road (to Prince of Wales Road)
 Prince of Wales Road (Poole Road to Branksome Wood Road)
 Queens Road
 St John's Road (Christchurch Road to Owls Road)
 Seabourne Road
 Seamoor Road
 Southbourne Grove
 Southbourne Road (Southbourne Grove to Belle Vue Road)
 Stour Road (Tuckton Roundabout to Borough Boundary)
 Surrey Road (Queens Road to Prince of Wales Road)
 Turbary Park Avenue
 Victoria Avenue
 Wallisdown Road
 Wellington Road
 Wentworth Avenue
 West Cliff Road

Western Road (Alumhurst Road to Borough Boundary)
 Wimborne Road (Talbot Avenue to Castle Lane West)
 Withermoor Road
Local Distributor Roads
 Abbot Road
 Beaufort Road
 Broadway Lane (Castle Lane West to Shillingstone Drive)
 Carbery Avenue
 Charminster Avenue (Gresham Road to Malvern Road)
 Chesildene Drive
 Cleveland Road
 Clingan Road
 Commercial Road (Terrace Road to Poole Hill)
 Coombe Avenue
 Cranleigh Road
 Dean Park Crescent
 East Howe Lane
 East Avenue (Glenferness Avenue to Wimborne Road)
 Exeter Road (Priory Road to Terrace Road)
 Green Road (Abbott Road to Ripon Road)
 Harewood Avenue (Littledown Avenue to Christchurch Road)
 Heron Court Road (Alma Road to Abbott Road)
 High Howe Lane (Ringwood Road to Knight's Road)
 Holdenhurst Road (Ashley Road to King's Park Drive)
 Iford Lane (Clingan Road to Iford Roundabout)
 Leybourne Avenue



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- Littledown Avenue
- Malvern Road (Charminster Avenue to Wimborne Road)
- Muscliffe Lane (Castle Lane West to Shillingstone Drive)
- Old Christchurch Road (Holdenhurst Road to Dean Park Crescent)
- Palmerston Road
- Poole Hill
- Poole Lane (Turbury Park Avenue to Wimborne Road)
- Redhill Drive (Coombe Avenue to Ensbury Park Gyratory)
- Richmond Hill (Richmond Gardens to Wimborne Road)
- Richmond Gardens (Richmond Hill to Dean Park Crescent)
- Ripon Road
- Shillingstone Drive
- St Clement's Road (Cleveland Road to Palmerston Road)
- Terrace Road
- Tuckton Road (Carbery Avenue to Tuckton