Royal Borough of Greenwich

Supplementary Planning Document

Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance

December 2018

ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the design of residential extensions, basements and conversions. It expands upon adopted Local Plan policies and is a material consideration for planning applications. It should be used at the start of the design process, when exploring possible design solutions.

1.2 The guidance explains the types of residential extensions that can be built and focuses on encouraging good design by concentrating on broad issues such as size, height, position and layout. It sets out examples of well-designed extensions and shows how extra living space can be created, whilst respecting the character of the area, the streetscape, the original building and the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

1.3 The SPD offers guidance on what types of issues and design considerations must be considered when building a new basement or extending or converting an existing basement. This will help to ensure the built and natural environment are preserved and the amenity of neighbours is protected.

1.4 General guidance is also included on the conversion of houses, shops and other premises into flats in order to ensure that extra homes that are provided offer a high standard of accommodation and relate well to their surroundings.

1.5 The Royal Borough will consider applications for residential extensions, basements and conversions against all relevant Development Plan policies, particularly Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies ('Core Strategy') policies DH1, DH(a) and DH(b) as well as the London Plan, other relevant guidance and the individual circumstances of each case.

All new residential extensions, basements and conversions should…

- respect the amenity of neighbours particularly their privacy, daylight, sunlight and avoid a sense of enclosure;
- be sensitive to the original building and buildings around it;
- use complementary materials; and,
- respect the street scene and character of the area.

Conservation matters

This SPD includes some additional design guidance which applies specifically to alterations to dwellings in conservation areas, locally listed buildings and statutory listed buildings. You will find guidance throughout the document in these yellow boxes. If your property is a statutory listed building you may need listed building consent. It is a criminal offence to carry out works on a statutory listed building without consent.

2. Permitted development rights

2.1 If you live in a 'single family dwelling house' (see glossary for definition) you can make certain types of minor changes to your property without needing to apply for planning permission. These are called 'permitted development rights.' Permitted development rights do not apply to flats or where the dwelling house has been created through a 'prior approval.'

2.2 For more information on what you can and cannot do under permitted development rights please visit the planning portal website where you can find interactive guides on common projects including residential extensions. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has also produced technical guidance on permitted development for householders.

2.3 In a number of cases, 'prior approval' from the local planning authority may be required before carrying out permitted development. Prior approval means that a developer has to seek approval from the local planning authority that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed. Sometimes these permitted development rights are for a temporary period or for a limited time period. More information on the prior approval process can be found on the planning portal website or in the planning practice guidance.

2.4 It is advisable to apply for a certificate of lawfulness for proposed development as proof that your household building work is within permitted development rights. More information can be found on the planning portal website. Although your proposal may not require planning permission because it falls under permitted development rights, this document can still be used as good practice guidance to ensure all extensions, basements and conversions are well designed.

Conservation matters

Houses in conservation areas have fewer permitted development rights. Planning permission will be required for roof extensions, rear extensions of more than one storey, side extensions and external cladding. Larger home extensions covered by the 'prior approval' procedure will also require planning permission. Statutory listed buildings do not have permitted development rights.

Planning permission will also be required for the demolition of a building measuring more than 115 cubic metres or the demolition of a gate, fence, wall or railing over one metre high next to a highway, or over two metres high elsewhere.

In some conservation areas permitted development rights may have been removed by a planning control called an Article 4 Direction. There are 20 conservation areas in Royal Greenwich and Article 4 Directions are currently in force in six of these areas. For a list of conservation areas and where Article 4 Directions apply please visit the conservation pages on the Royal Greenwich website.

3. The process – where to begin

The planning application

3.1 When assessing a planning application, Royal Greenwich will need to consider a number of issues. These will include whether your proposal will have a positive or negative impact on the original house and its surroundings; whether your extension will cause a loss of residential amenity to neighbouring properties contrary to Core Strategy policy DH(b). Chapter 4 provides more detail on amenity and other considerations.

3.2 The guidelines are here to help you prepare a successful planning application and we recommend you design your extension in accordance with these guidelines.

3.3 There are national requirements with which you need to comply when making a planning application; these include submitting a planning application form, a site plan, a location plan and the correct fee. Royal Greenwich also has a local information requirements list; you should check this list to see which additional plans or documents need to be submitted with your planning application in order for it to be accepted as valid.

3.4 A planning application can be made to the local authority directly through the planning portal website. Planning application forms can also be found on the planning portal. The type of application form needed will depend on the proposal; more information on the type of application form to use can be found on the planning portal website.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

If you live in a statutory listed building you should assume that Listed Building Consent or a Certificate of Lawfulness of proposed works will be required for internal or external work in addition to planning permission (where this is required). Please refer to the listed buildings webpages for more information on the types of consents, how to apply and what will need to be submitted as part of the application. There is no fee for either of these applications. It is a criminal offence to carry out works to a listed building without consent.

Any material alteration to a statutory listed building which affects its special architectural and historic significance will require Listed Building Consent. This applies externally and internally and alterations which harm this significance would be unacceptable as they do not constitute sustainable development.

It is often possible through careful design and understanding of historic significance to alter a listed building. This can help to ensure such buildings remain viable for future use, but this will require specialist expertise and Listed Building Consent.

Conservation matters

Planning applications are judged against stricter criteria within conservation areas where all proposals must seek to preserve or enhance, and not cause harm to the special character or appearance of the area.

Any planning application in a conservation area will be expected to take account of the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place, as well as the guidelines set out in this document.

Adopted CAMS for Royal Greenwich can be found on the Royal Greenwich website. In addition, Guidance Notes should be referred to where they are in place for those areas covered by Article 4 Directions.

Other considerations

Building regulations

3.5 Many types of domestic building works require Building Regulations approval. It is strongly advised that the Royal Greenwich Building Control Section is contacted at the earliest possible stage. Building Control assesses the structural safety of an extension, basement or conversion and compliance with building regulations is not the same as obtaining planning permission.

3.6 The appropriate consents need to be obtained from both the Building Control and Development Planning sections before any building works take place.

3.7 Additional advice on building regulations for listed buildings is published on the Historic England website.

3.8 Please contact the Building Control Team for more information and advice.

Address: Fifth floor, The Woolwich Centre,
35 Wellington Street,
Woolwich, SE18 6HQ

Telephone: 020 8921 5413/5410

Email: building.control@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Land ownership

3.9 Land ownership issues and boundary disputes are not planning issues. However, it is important that extensions are built within the boundaries of the property they relate to. The Land Registry can often provide maps to help with boundary issues. All boundaries should be clearly marked on the plans submitted as part of the planning application.

3.10 If you do not solely own the land you are submitting a planning application for, you must sign Certificate B under Section 8 of the planning application form to certify that you have informed all other land owners of the planning application.

3.11 If you intend to carry out work that involves: building a free standing wall or a wall of a building up to or astride the boundary with a neighbouring property; work on or building against an existing party wall or party structure; or excavating near a neighbouring building, then the neighbours should be notified and it may be necessary to secure an agreement writing under the provisions of the Party Wall Act 1996. An Explanatory Booklet has been published by the Government that provides further guidance.

Consultation on planning applications

Notifying neighbouring properties

3.12 Once the application has been validated, the Royal Borough as the local planning authority is required to notify neighbouring properties in line with planning law. If the property is a listed building or within a conservation area a site notice will be displayed in the vicinity of the site and the application will be advertised in a local paper.

3.13 Any comments made in response to a planning application must be made in writing and include the address of the respondent. Any comments should be restricted to material planning considerations. Issues such as loss of view, or negative effect on the value of properties are not material planning considerations. Comments can cover (but are not limited to):

- protecting outlook from a property;
- overlooking/loss of privacy;
- loss of light or overshadowing;
- parking, highway safety, traffic, noise;
- accessibility, including disabled persons access;
- layout and density of buildings, design, appearance and materials;
- effect on statutory listed buildings and conservation areas;
- nature conservation;
- government policy;
- policies and proposals in the Development Plan; and,
- previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions).

Consultation for prior notification

3.14 Under temporary permitted development rights, a single storey rear extension can be built without planning permission up to six metres if attached to a terraced or

semi-detached house, or eight metres for a detached house. You must still submit a prior notification application to determine whether prior approval is needed. As part of this process, adjoining neighbouring properties must be consulted under the neighbourhood consultation scheme.

3.15 Applicants must set out in their application form all adjoining occupiers i.e. those who share a boundary, including to the rear so that the local authority can consult these neighbouring properties. The neighbouring properties will have 21 days to respond to the consultation and raise any objections or comments.

3.16 More information can be found on the planning portal website. Please note that these permitted development rights for larger extensions do not apply in conservation areas and areas where Article 4 Directions apply.

When can you expect a decision to be made?

3.17 Royal Greenwich Councillors have given the Chief Planning Officer the power (delegated authority) to determine most residential extension, conversion and basement applications. Where this is the case, we will try to make the decision within an eight week period, starting from the day after the day your application is received.

3.18 If eight or more objections are received, the application cannot be decided under delegated authority and will instead go to planning committee. Please see the Royal Greenwich Statement of Community Involvement for further information. Planning committee meetings are held regularly and further information, including dates and times of the meetings can be found on the Royal Greenwich website.

Fees and levies

3.19 The fees for a planning application can be found on the Planning Portal website, along with the relevant application forms.

3.20 Any development that creates a new dwelling or 100m^2 or more of additional floorspace may be liable to pay the local community infrastructure levy (CIL) and the Mayoral CIL.

3.21 The fees and exemptions for the local CIL can be found on the Royal Greenwich website and the fees for the Mayor's CIL can be found on the Greater London Authority (GLA) website.

4. Design issues and amenity considerations

Introduction

4.1 This section sets out guidance on design issues and amenity considerations that should be taken on board when designing an extension or conversion. The guidance set out in this section is good practice and should also inform proposals that fall under permitted development rights to ensure that these developments are well-designed.

Conservation matters

Extensions should respect the original architectural features and detailing of the dwelling and should be designed to complement the dwelling in terms of windows, doors, openings, roofs and materials. UPVC replacement windows and doors will be discouraged where they would be detrimental to the character of a conservation area.

Please note, if the exterior of the house would include cladding of any part of the house with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles the application will need planning permission rather than a certificate of lawfulness in line with the General Permitted Development Order 2015.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

Houses that are listed buildings are particularly sensitive to alterations that might affect their character. There are two types of listed building, locally listed and statutory listed. The guidance set out in these yellow boxes throughout this document is aimed at statutory listed buildings, although the guidance may also be useful to inform applications proposing to alter locally listed buildings.

Locally listed buildings should be protected and their character preserved. Proposals for unsympathetic alteration of locally listed buildings will be strongly discouraged. Statutory listed buildings are afforded a higher degree of protection than locally listed buildings and any alterations to statutory listed buildings are likely to require listed building consent.

Proposals for external alterations, internal alterations or additions to statutory listed buildings should respect the integrity of the building and harmonise with their architectural character. Development should not detract from the setting and proportions of a listed building.

Residential amenity

4.2 Extensions should be designed to ensure there is not an unacceptable loss of privacy to neighbouring dwellings and gardens. The degree of overlooking is affected by distance, the angles of view, and existing site circumstances, which

should be taken on board at the design stage. The possibility of overlooking could be an issue for extensions of two or more storeys. There are no specific distances required between habitable rooms facing each other; this will be dependent on the existing character and built form of the area.

4.3 Privacy can be safeguarded by providing sufficient back to back separation between the extension and neighbouring properties and by avoiding side windows above ground floor level (or ensuring they are obscure glazed). Paragraphs 4.8-4.10 set out further information on windows.

4.4 Proposals for roof terraces and balconies will need to demonstrate that careful attention has been paid to aspect, privacy, outlook and appropriate screening in order for it to be acceptable.

4.5 The proposed extension should not overshadow neighbouring habitable rooms or private gardens to result in an un-neighbourly sense of enclosure, nor should it reduce the amount of daylight they receive. For instance, as illustrated in Figure 1, a double storey extension could reduce the amount of daylight received by neighbouring properties and would not be acceptable. A single storey rear extension may be a more appropriate option.

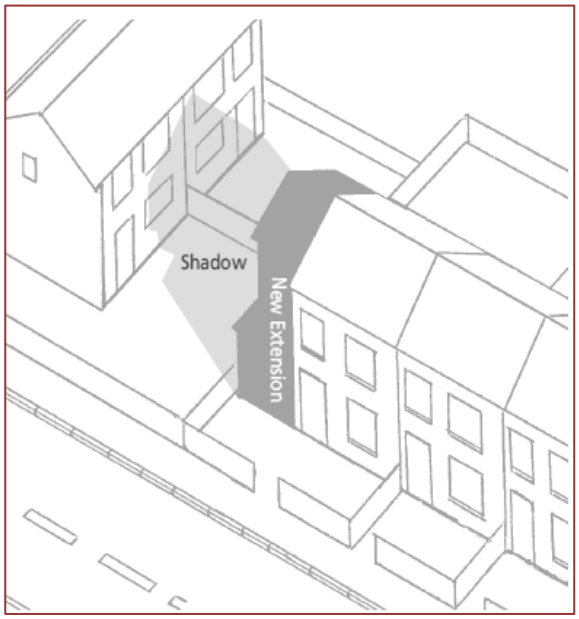


Figure 1: Unacceptable overshadowing

4.6 If a proposal would mean that the immediate outlook from a neighbour's windows would become unsightly or appear overbearing from the neighbouring property or street it would normally be refused. If a view from a neighbour's principal windows and/or the immediate private area of a garden is dominated and overshadowed by a proposed extension, then permission is unlikely to be granted.

4.7 It is expected that the greatest part of any overshadowing caused by a new extension should be confined to the applicant's own land. Two storey extensions are more likely to cause issues with overshadowing because of their height, size and orientation.

Windows and doors in extensions

4.8 The character of a property can be harmed by windows or doors in the extension if they differ from the style and character of the original. In most cases, windows

and doors should be of the same proportions, materials and style as those in the existing building. In addition, windows should be positioned to match the symmetry of those in the existing building.

4.9 Windows should not overlook a habitable room or garden of a neighbouring property and as a general rule there should be no new windows above ground floor level in any side wall directly facing and within two metres of a neighbouring property, other than obscured glazed windows serving bathrooms, WCs and landings.

4.10 Any windows to the side of a property may be acceptable if they cannot be opened and are obscurely glazed up to 1.7m (when measured from finished floor level) as set out in the General Permitted Development Order 2015. Where overlooking already exists new windows in a proposed extension should not lead to any increase in that overlooking.

Roofs and balconies

4.11 The roofs of new extensions should generally follow and complement the pattern of the main roof. If it is appropriate for an extension to have a flat roof or different pitch from the main house this should not detract from the design integrity of the building. This may be acceptable for example for a single storey rear extension that would not be seen from the road.

4.12 While balconies and roof terraces can replace garden space lost through the construction of an extension, the use of these roofs for recreational purposes requires planning permission. Flat roofs should not normally form balconies or terraces, in order to protect the privacy of adjacent occupiers. However, if proposals can demonstrate that the privacy of neighbours will not be affected and careful attention has been paid to aspect, privacy, outlook and appropriate screening, a balcony or terrace may be acceptable.

Solar panels

4.13 The optimum location for photovoltaic (PV) cells and panels for solar water heating systems is an un-shaded south facing aspect; however, an un-shaded southeast and southwest aspect can still be appropriate. The cells or panels should preferably be integrated into the existing roof tiling systems and laid to the same angle as the roof pitch so as not to appear overbearing.

4.14 Solar panels should be located to the rear of the property wherever possible so as not to cause visual harm to the street scene, although this will depend upon the optimum position for harnessing energy. Further guidance on renewable energy can be found on the planning practice guidance website.

Conservation matters

Different rules may apply to solar panels in conservation areas; please refer to the planning portal or the General Permitted Development Order 2015 for more information.

External wall insulation and materials

4.15 The materials chosen for an extension are very important and should be related as closely as possible to those used in the original building. For the walls this is likely to mean obtaining the best match of bricks, both in colour, tone and texture. This can be more difficult where the original bricks are old and weathered, therefore the re-use of salvaged materials can assist in blending old and new.

4.16 In some circumstances high-quality modern materials that complement those of the existing property may be more appropriate; however, using different material for small areas could make an extension look out of place and visually separate it from the main house.

Conservation matters

In conservation areas, planning permission is likely to be required when replacing external cladding – see the planning portal for details. Please refer to the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place, for further guidance on external wall materials and colours. In addition, Guidance Notes should be referred to where they are in place for those areas covered by Article 4 Directions.

4.17 Some external alterations to a house may be permitted development and as such will not require planning permission. However, planning permission is required to carry out external wall alterations to a house if the external materials used change the colour or texture of the existing house.

4.18 For example, if an existing house is pebble-dashed and if the proposed works are to have a pebble-dashed finish that is of the same colour and texture as the existing finish, planning permission would not be required. If an existing house is pebble-dashed and the proposed works would have a smooth cream finish there would be a change in the colour and texture of the house and therefore planning permission would be required.

4.19 In addition, if the works would go beyond the boundary of your house, for example onto an adjoining property, or would project over adjacent land or the highway, then planning permission would be required for the external wall works in this instance.

4.20 For works to be considered permitted development the materials must be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing house. Table 1 summarises what is meant by similar appearance. Please note that this is for guidance purposes only and the ultimate decision rests with the planning department on a case by case basis.

Table 1: Materials where works would be considered permitted development

Existing house	Finishing material	Similar appearance
Brick	Brick slips	Yes (Certificate of Lawfulness advised)
Render	Same colour render	Yes (Certificate of Lawfulness advised)
Render	Different colour render, brick or pebble-dashed	No (likely to require planning permission)
Brick	Render/pebbledash	No (likely to require planning permission)
Pebble-dashed	Pebble-dashed	Yes (Certificate of Lawfulness advised)
Pebble-dashed	Render or brick	No (likely to require planning permission)

4.21 If you are planning to renovate more than half a wall by cladding or rendering the external surface or dry-lining the internal surface then you are required under the Building Regulations to add insulation to improve the thermal performance of the property.

Back gardens

4.22 Gardens make a significant contribution to local character and specifically towards biodiversity, drainage, tranquillity and sense of space. Gardens help to enhance the setting of buildings and provide amenity value for residents.

4.23 It is therefore important that reasonable amenity space, particularly green space, is retained when building an extension not only to protect the visual and amenity standards of the existing dwelling but also to safeguard the privacy and amenity of adjacent residents.

4.24 Extensions should not reduce the garden to such an extent that it is out of scale with the house nor should they over dominate the garden. This could be the case where an extension takes up more than 50% of the existing garden space, or in conservation areas where the open aspect of gardens is a characteristic of the spatial layout of the conservation area.

Climate change and biodiversity (including green roofs and living walls)

4.25 Green roofs and living walls are layers of living plants that are installed on top of conventional roofs and walls, as illustrated by Figure 2. These types of living roofs

and walls will be encouraged as they can enhance biodiversity, reduce flood risk by absorbing heavy rainfall and provide high standards of insulation.

4.26 The design for a green roof or living wall should follow the Green Roof Organisation Code of Practice (www.greenroofcode.co.uk) as set out in the Greener Greenwich SPD.

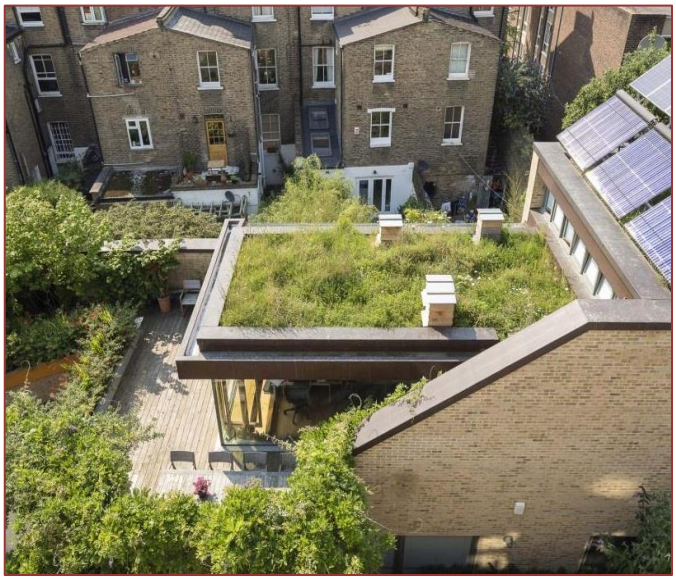


Figure 2: An example of improving biodiversity in an urban area – a green roof on a house in Newington Green

4.27 Gardens provide valuable drainage which help to prevent flooding. Paving over front or back gardens prevents rainfall from soaking into the ground, reducing the amount that reaches our natural underground aquifers, and places increasing pressure on our drainage systems. Although paving over one or two gardens may not seem to make a difference, the combined effect of lots of people in a street or area doing this can increase the risk of flooding.

4.28 If you wish to replace your driveway, permeable materials such as gravel, vegetation including grass or wheel tracks should be used, although it is possible to have up to 5m^2 of impermeable paved area. Water should be directed away from an impermeable surface to a border of vegetation or soak away. Planning permission may be required to replace your driveway; more information can be found on the planning portal website.

4.29 The Royal Borough has a legal obligation to ensure that certain species are protected. If developments, including extensions, are likely to impact upon protected species, you will be expected to take measures to ensure that no harm, loss or long term threat arises to those species.

4.30 As set out in the Greenwich Biodiversity Action Plan (supported by Core Strategy policy OS4 and paragraph 4.5.19), the six priority species are bat, black poplar, black redstart, hedgehog, stag beetle and water vole. If you believe you have any of these protected species present on your property, you should contact the planning department before proceeding with the development.

Trees

4.31 Trees are an important part of the natural environment and some trees are protected. Works to a tree may require permission; therefore before undertaking any works the applicant must check if a tree is in a conservation area, if it has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) attached to it or if the tree has been protected by a planning condition. Further information can be found on the Royal Greenwich website.

4.32 Existing trees should be shown on plans. If there are trees close to your proposed extension you will also be expected to protect them and their root systems during the construction process. For example, no work should be undertaken within the root protection area of the tree and the roots should be protected with fencing which cannot be moved during the construction process.

4.33 Roots smaller than 25mm diameter may be pruned slightly; however any roots larger than this or in clumps should not be severed without consulting an arboriculturist as such roots might be essential to the tree's health. Other tree protection measures that comply with *British Standard 5837 – Trees in Relation to Construction* may be necessary and the Royal Borough's Tree Officer should be consulted for further advice. If any trees are to be felled, replacement provision should also be shown.

Sustainability

4.34 Royal Greenwich promotes and encourages a sustainable approach to new buildings and extensions; an extension or alteration provides various opportunities to improve a dwelling's environmental performance. For instance, responsible sourcing of materials, extra insulation, double/triple glazing, living roofs and rainwater recycling should all be taken into consideration.

4.35 The development also presents an opportunity to include on-site energy generation features such as solar panel water heating, photovoltaic panels and ground source heat exchangers.

4.36 All developments will be required to meet the appropriate Building Regulations and applicants should be aware that extensions, conversions and basements can sometimes require the upgrading of the existing building under the thermal requirements of Building Regulations.

4.37 The development should follow the modern construction standards including energy conservation and sustainability aspects of the Core Strategy, London Plan and Greener Greenwich SPD.

5. Common forms of extensions

5.1 These guidelines set out the importance of balancing your need for space against the need to prevent your extension from harming the amenity of adjoining residents or the character of the house and local area.

5.2 Please note that various sections of this chapter may apply to your proposal and the chapter should be read as a whole. For example, if you are proposing a two storey side extension you will need to take into consideration the section on side extensions and the additional section on two storey side extensions.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

A new extension should not dominate an historic building. There is no particular rule on the appropriate size of an extension to a listed building; it depends on the impact it would have on the special architectural and historic significance of the property. The use of appropriate materials is particularly pertinent.

There may be an opportunity to replace a poorly built and designed extension with a new structure. It should be noted however, that there may be some cases where a new extension will not be permitted.

All applications for extensions to listed buildings will require Listed Building Consent and will need to be informed by the special architectural and historic significance. Applicants are advised to seek pre-application advice for applications affecting statutory listed buildings, including the setting of a listed building.

Single storey rear extensions and conservatories

5.3 This is the most common type of extension in Royal Greenwich and is often the easiest and most obvious way to extend a house to provide the living space you need. Potential issues that may arise from rear extensions frequently include overshadowing and overlooking. Careful attention to the size, position, height and design of the extension can help to overcome these issues.

Conservation matters

Development must preserve, enhance and not harm the conservation area. Within conservation areas it is particularly important that extensions respect the original architectural features and detailing of the dwelling. Planning permission will be required for many rear extensions in conservation areas, particularly those covered by additional planning controls through Article 4 Directions. Any planning application in a conservation area will be expected to take account of the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place. In addition, Guidance Notes should be referred to where they are in place for those areas covered by Article 4 Directions.

Depth

5.4 It is important that this type of extension does not dominate and remains subservient to the original house (see Figure 3). It should not normally project out more than 3.6m from the rear wall of the original house (if the house is attached) as a deeper extension could block daylight and sunlight for neighbouring properties.

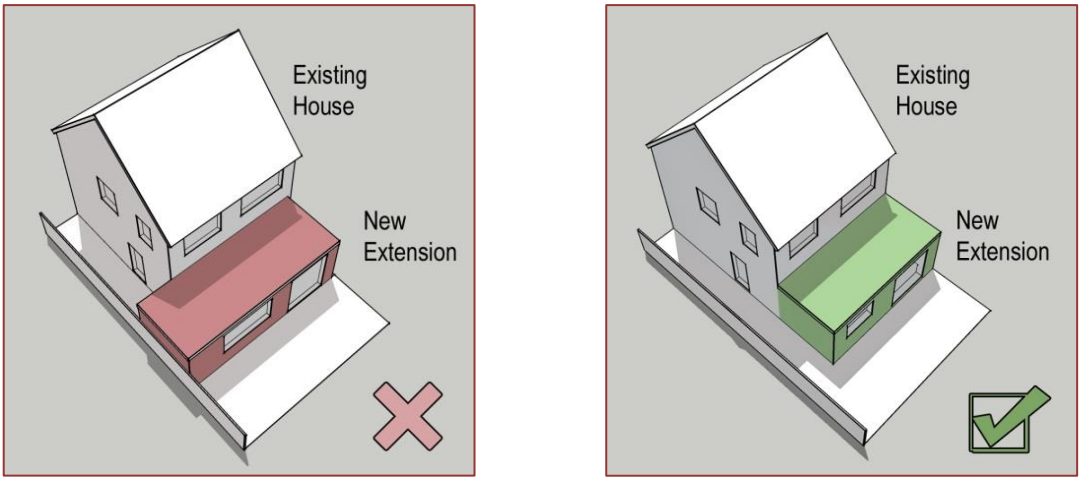


Figure 3 Single storey rear extensions should be subservient and in line with the original building, as illustrated by the drawing on the right

5.5 Under permitted development rights, you can build a single storey rear extension from the original wall of the house by up to three metres if it is an attached house or up to four metres if it is a detached house. This limit has been temporarily increased to six metres if an attached house and eight metres if a detached house until 30 May 2019.

5.6 These temporarily increased limits are subject to the prior approval process and the neighbourhood consultation scheme. More information on the prior approval process can be found on the planning portal website or in the planning practice guidance. These increased limits do not apply in conservation areas.

5.7 In addition, to remain within permitted development rights, the total area of ground covered by all buildings (including garages and outbuildings, such as a garden shed) within the curtilage of the house (other than the original house) cannot exceed 50% of the total area of the plot, excluding the ground area covered by the original house.

5.8 It is important to note that these limits apply to the original building line as it was first built; applicants may not have extended the property themselves, however a previous owner may have and it is up to the applicant to investigate this.

5.9 Any secondary extensions, canopies or conservatories added to existing extensions may exceed the above limits, which would require planning permission

and may not normally be permitted. Some extensions that exceed these depths could overshadow neighbouring houses. Such extensions will normally be refused.

Position

5.10 To make sure that no part of the extension (including the guttering and foundations) crosses the boundary line, planning permission will not normally be granted unless side walls of the extension are set in from the property boundary.

Roof design

5.11 A flat roof will frequently be acceptable for a single storey rear extension. However, there may be instances where a rear proposal would be seen between or over other properties in the street, in which case a pitched roof would be preferred. If using a pitched roof the pitch should be shallow to prevent blocking sunlight and daylight to neighbouring properties.

5.12 If a flat roof is acceptable, the extension should be set back from the boundary line so that the gutters do not over hang the neighbouring property. However, if you build right up to the boundary line a parapet wall should be built to stop rainwater flowing into your neighbour's garden.

Adjoining extensions

5.13 Where there is a deep extension on one side but not the other, permission may be granted for an extension which, is not full width and is set far enough back from the boundary that it does not block light to neighbouring houses, or lead to a loss of outlook or enclosure (see Figure 4). Where deep extensions have been granted on both sides of a property, a deep extension may be acceptable.

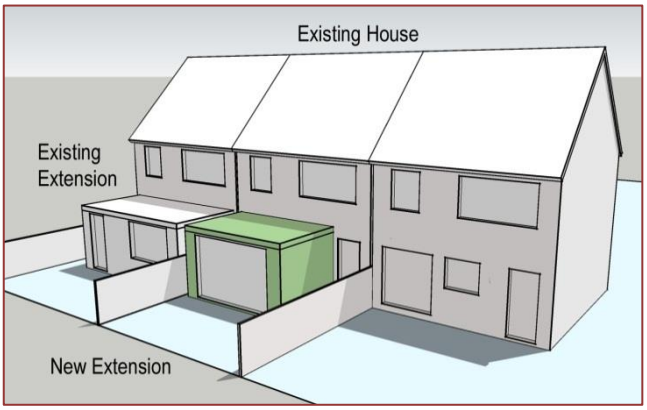


Figure 4 Adjoining extensions

Infill extensions

5.14 Some older houses were originally built in an L-shape or stepped and have an existing rear addition. This means that there are two or three rear walls. Under permitted development rights, you can extend from each rear wall by three metres if it is an attached house and by four metres if the house is detached or deeper under prior notification (see paragraph 5.5).

5.15 Where the original rear wall of a house is stepped then each of these stepped walls will form the rear wall of the original dwelling house. In such cases, the limits on extensions apply to any of the rear walls being extended. As can be seen in the right hand drawing in Figure 5 below, each wall of the original house can be extended as long as the original stepped appearance of the property is maintained.

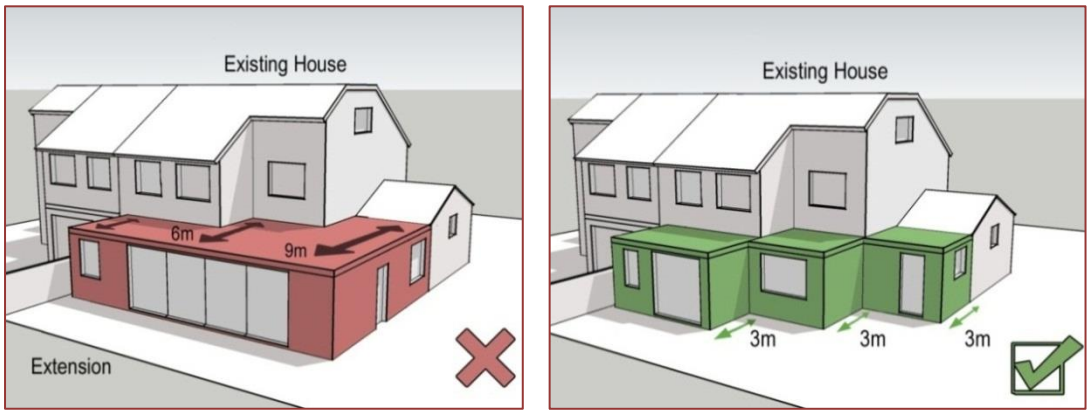


Figure 5 Infill extensions: the stepped appearance of the original house should be maintained, as illustrated by the drawing on the right

5.16 Extensions as illustrated in the left hand drawing in Figure 5 are not permitted development and will be discouraged because they can cause harm to the neighbouring properties and block their daylight. What will be considered acceptable will depend on the impact upon neighbouring occupiers and their amenity.

5.17 Under the temporary prior approval process for larger household extensions introduced on 30 May 2013 to 30 May 2019, an infill extension for up to 6m for attached houses and 8m for detached houses can be applied for under the prior approval process. However, as set out in paragraph 5.4, it is only considered acceptable to extend by up to 3.6m in Royal Greenwich. Extensions larger than this would be discouraged because they are likely to restrict light to neighbouring properties.

Conservatories

5.18 A conservatory or pergola to the rear of a house is still considered as an extension. The criteria that apply to brick and rendered extensions also apply to these types of extensions. The side elevations of a conservatory should be built using solid materials to a maximum height of two metres to allow the passage of natural light and prevent any overlooking. Planning permission is not usually granted where the proposal is to add a conservatory or pergola to the rear of an existing extension.

Garages

5.19 If you have a garage in the rear garden that is accessed by a side driveway, you should design your extension to ensure there is enough space for a vehicle to access the garage (see Figure 6). You may need to move the garage further down the garden (which may require planning permission) or design the closest corner of the extension to leave enough room for manoeuvring.

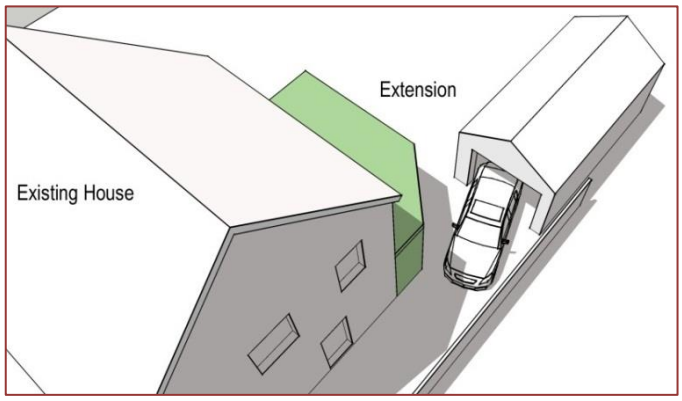


Figure 6 Ensuring access to a rear garage

5.20 Alternatively, it may be possible to provide a replacement parking space in the front garden, although landscaping should be retained or replaced with new landscaping elsewhere and the materials used should be permeable. Further guidance on permeable materials can be found in DCLG Guidance on Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens. The front boundary treatment (e.g. hedge, low brick wall or wood fence) should also be maintained where possible, especially in conservation areas where they add to character and appearance.

Outbuildings

5.21 Although many outbuildings will be allowed as permitted development there are strict rules about proximity to site boundaries and about height. The planning portal website should be consulted for more information. Outbuildings should be in proportion to the original house and garden and should not impact upon the open character of the surrounding area. They must be sensitively designed, in the appropriate locality, taking into account the residential amenity of neighbouring properties including for daylight, sunlight and privacy.

Two storey rear and first floor rear extensions

5.22 Two storey rear extensions and first floor rear additions can provide more internal space, however they are often discouraged because they can have a greater impact on neighbouring properties and the street scene. Any extension would need to be in keeping with the size of the original house and not appear bulky. This will ensure that the extension would have as little impact as possible on the character of the house, neighbouring properties, and the street scene.

5.23 Rear extensions and first floor additions will be refused where there is not an appropriate separation distance between the property and its boundaries. There

may be an exception to this rule where the house sits in a spacious plot with substantial distances between boundaries and adjacent dwellings.

5.24 Rear extensions should not overshadow, physically dominate, lead to a loss of privacy or create a sense of enclosure for neighbouring occupiers. The size and siting of an extension together with the position of habitable room windows will determine whether an extension overshadows or dominates an adjacent property. Where these amenity issues cannot be resolved through good design, it is unlikely the scheme would be approved.

5.25 Flat roofs will be unacceptable where the extension is visible from the public highway unless this is the roof style on the original house. Even where the roof is not visible from the public highway it is preferable that the roof matches that of the original house.

Side extensions

5.26 Like a single-storey rear extension, a side extension is an easy way to extend a house to provide additional space. Side extensions, however, have an impact on the character of the house and the street scene and careful attention must be paid to the depth, height and position of the extension. Side extensions should accurately reflect the style of the main house and remain secondary in size and appearance.

5.27 The roof of the side extension should reflect the roof pitch of the original house (see Figure 7), as a side extension will have an impact on the character of the street. This applies to both single and two storey extensions. The ridge height of the roof of a side extension should be set below the existing ridge height to ensure the extension is secondary to the original house.

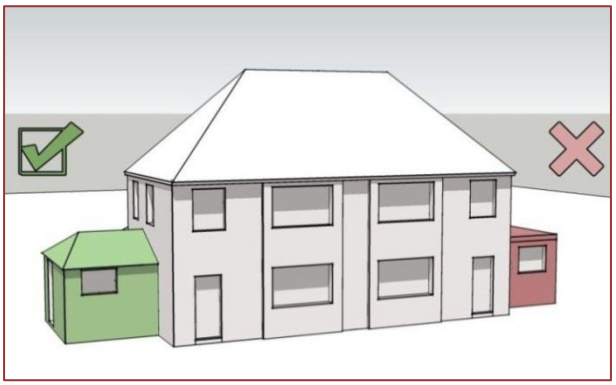


Figure 7 Side extensions should reflect the original house

Position

5.28 The extension should normally be set back slightly from the front wall of the house to allow the original house to remain prominent. A set back from the side boundary of 0.3m will also ensure enough room for guttering. Parapet walls will normally be refused permission unless they are a feature of the original house.

Proportion

5.29 The height and width of the side extension should be proportionate to the main house. The width should be less than half the width of the main house.

Conservation matters

Planning permission will be required for side extensions in conservation areas; planning applications will be expected to take account of the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place. In addition, Guidance Notes should be referred to where they are in place for those areas covered by Article 4 Directions.

Development must preserve, enhance and not harm the conservation area. Within conservation areas it is particularly important that side extensions do not block or diminish the gaps between properties which contribute to the streetscape.

Small side extensions may be acceptable where they do not dominate. They must respect the original architectural features and detailing of the dwelling and the use of appropriate materials is particularly pertinent.

Corner plots

5.30 Where the house is on a corner plot with a road alongside it, a side extension will be visible from the public highway. The extension should therefore be set back from the boundary by one metre and be proportionate to the dimensions of the main house in order to maintain the open aspect and protect the character of the street.

5.31 It may be necessary to use patterned brickwork or matching render to soften the appearance of the enlarged side wall of your house. Additionally, if the boundary does not run parallel to the house the extension should not run parallel to the boundary but should be staggered, as illustrated by the top image in Figure 8.

5.32 To help the extension blend in with the house and street, the design and style of the roof should match the original house including the pitch of the roof and the finished material.

5.33 Windows should match the original house in terms of style and position and where possible relevant design features should be copied from the main house.



Figure 8 Side extensions on corner plots should be set back from the road and staggered where necessary

Two storey side extensions

5.34 Two storey side extensions are likely to have an impact on the character and setting of the street. Therefore, in addition to the above guidance, two storey side extensions must be designed so as to avoid a terracing effect, or the loss of the open character between properties. This also applies to first floor extensions above existing garages.

Garages

5.35 If you are proposing to construct a garage, this should be large enough to store a car and to get in and out of the car. There should also be enough room for your garage doors to open outwards onto your drive, but it should not open out over the public highway.

5.36 If you are proposing to demolish or convert a garage, you should verify that your permitted development rights have not been removed. Where they have been removed, as part of a planning application, details will need to be provided about how you intend to provide replacement off street parking. The size of your house will affect the number of car parking spaces that should be provided. Table 6.2 of the London Plan sets out the parking standards that should be complied with.

5.37 The materials you choose for driveways should be permeable to ensure they do not add to any surface water flooding. See paragraph 4.28 for further guidance. If you require a dropped kerb to access your drive you may need to include this in your planning application (if you live on a principal road or in a conservation area) or you may need to apply for additional highways approval.

5.38 Some garage conversions are permitted under permitted development rights; however, it is best to contact the local authority to check whether planning permission is required.

Front extensions and porches

Conservation matters

Front porches are permitted development even in conservation areas (subject to an Article 4 Direction being in place). Where permission is required for a front extension however, it is unlikely to be granted, as this is usually the most important and visible part of the house.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

A porch or any other type of front extension will require Listed Building Consent.

5.39 Front extensions will normally be refused if they are larger than a porch because they stand out, look bulky and can significantly adversely affect the character and appearance of the house and street scene. However, where the front of the house is staggered in an L shape a small front extension may be possible.



Figure 9 Front porches should not attach to the bay window

5.40 The porch should not be higher than a single storey and the roof design, windows and finishing materials should match the original house. They should not project forward of, or attach to, a bay window as illustrated in Figure 9. The porch door should lead directly to the original front door of the house.

5.41 Whilst most porches would be considered permitted development (see planning portal porches guide for more information) front extensions and porches should be minor and should not alter the overall appearance of the house or dominate the character of the street. Their style and roof line should reflect that of the main house and should not adjoin any front bay window.

Roof extensions/loft conversions

5.42 Loft conversions can create additional living space with minimal impact. Please see the planning portal loft conversion guide for more information. However, there is a danger that in achieving adequate headroom the new form of the roof could give the house a top heavy look, damaging the character of the house and the street.

5.43 Roof extensions should be proportionate to the size of the original house, and any proposals that change the roof form should seek to preserve or enhance the existing appearance in terms of height, scale and visual interest.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

If your house is listed you will need to apply for Listed Building Consent to alter the roof space, timbers and the outside of the roof.

5.44 In general, roof extensions will be refused planning permission on front facing roof slopes as they are likely to harm the character of the area. Mansard roofs will only be appropriate where they are already part of the character of the street scene or where they would not be harmful to the appearance of the house.

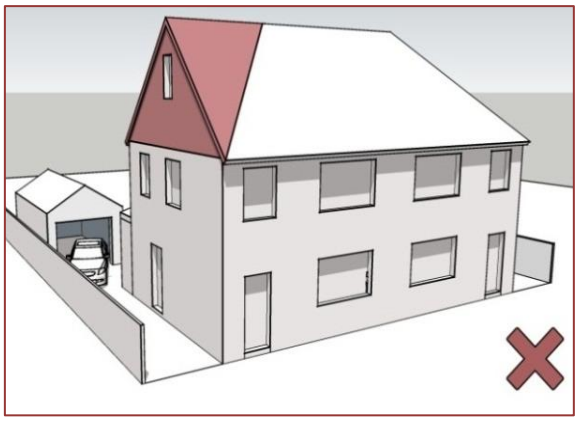


Figure 10 Roof extensions should not alter the pitch of the roof, such as this hip to gable extension



Figure 11 Dormer extension of appropriate scale

5.45 Planning permission will not be granted to alter or to convert a sloped hip end roof into a flat gable end roof on the side of the house, illustrated by Figure 10, as this would create an unbalanced, overbearing appearance to the house, semi-detached houses or terrace.

5.46 Dormer extensions should be small scale and the windows should be of an appropriate design considering the other windows in the house. Dormer extensions are acceptable to the rear of the house (see Figure 11) and may be acceptable to the side. In traditional buildings, the window head height of dormer windows should not necessarily be 2.1m above the respective floor level (as is the industry norm): the architectural composition may be more satisfactory if the window head height is reduced to 1.8m above floor level.

5.47 If dormer extensions are proposed on both the side and rear roof slopes they must remain separate extensions and not wrap around the side of the roof and join to create one extension (see Figure 12).

5.48 Full width dormer extensions will be discouraged on any roof face as they do not integrate well with pitched roof houses (see Figure 13).

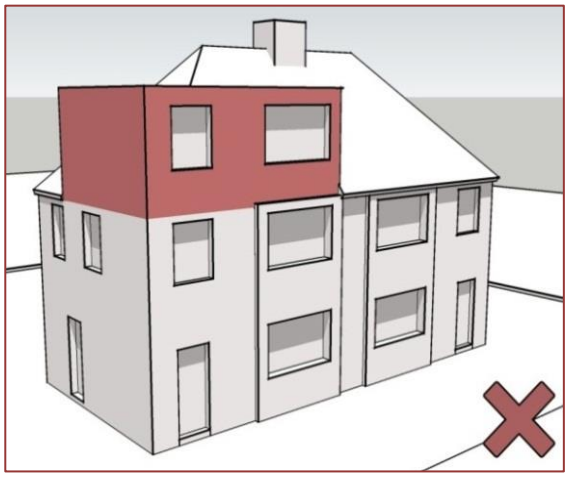


Figure 12 Overbearing wrap around extension

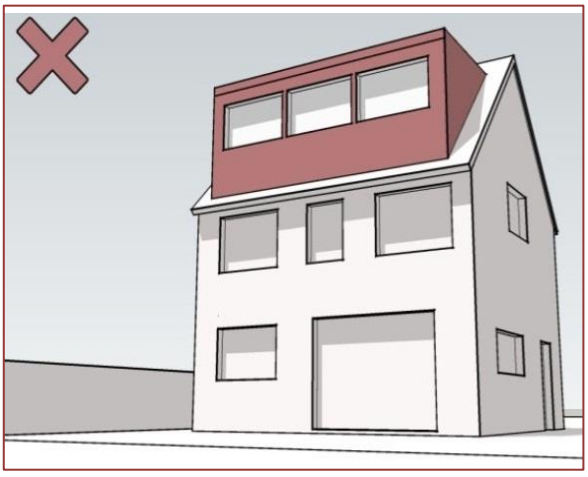


Figure 13 Box shaped dormers can be overbearing

Conservation matters

With the possible exception of the installation of roof lights, planning permission will be required for any alteration to a roof within conservation areas. If the installation of roof lights is the only alteration to a roof, then planning approval will not be necessary unless the area is subject to further planning controls through an Article 4 Direction. Conservation roof lights, which sit flush within the slope of the roof, should be specified (right hand image in Figure 14). Planning applications will be expected to take account of the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place

Roof extensions will be resisted where they damage unaltered roofscapes and compromise views through the conservation area, particularly where this is a clearly defined feature of the character of the area. Design must be sensitively considered so as not to overwhelm the roof and ensure any extension respects the architectural composition of the original house.

The scale, bulk, design, placement of roof lights, and the number of dormers must not dominate the roof and detract from its character and appearance. The position of dormer windows should relate to the window layout of the house. There may be scope for one or two modestly sized dormers at the rear of a property, although the number of dormers in the roof should normally be fewer than the number of windows on the floor below.

Dormer windows should be set well away from ridge, eaves and party walls, and the total width and height of a dormer window, including lead 'cheeks', should ideally be no greater than the window openings on the storeys below. The style of the windows should be in keeping with the windows of the main house. If the height of the slope of the roof allows, dormer windows should preferably have pitched or hipped roofs, where this is in character with the house.

Roof lights

5.49 Roof lights are best located on the side or rear of the house. Wherever roof lights are located, a traditional roof light with a through glazing bar is preferable over a large undivided glass roof light that can dominate the roof plane, unless this is appropriate to the character of the original house (see Figure 14). In addition, roof lights should not be so large that they reach the edge of the roof slope.



Figure 14 Inappropriate (left) and preferred (right) roof light designs

6. Basements

6.1 Basement development includes any excavation to form new or additional floorspace under the ground level (subterranean) of an existing property or within its curtilage and under its garden. This guidance applies to any extension or enlargement of existing basement accommodation and to any conversion of a cellar or cellars into habitable accommodation.

6.2 Most proposals for the construction of a basement will require planning permission. There may be certain circumstances where basement development may be 'Permitted Development' under the General Permitted Development Order 2015. The Planning Portal website provides the most up-to-date information on permitted development rights including an interactive householder guide.

6.3 For clarification as to whether a development satisfies the conditions of Permitted Development, an application for a Lawful Development Certificate should be submitted with the appropriate documentation, after which a formal decision will be made.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

If you live in a statutory listed building you are likely to need consent for external and internal work. It is important to consider both the physical impacts and impact on the significance of a listed building. It is paramount that the advice of an engineer experienced in dealing with historic structures and complex ground conditions is sought.

6.4 This guidance is aimed at promoting best practice in terms of basement development. However, the remit of planning does not extend to matters controlled under Building Regulations or other non-planning legislation, regulations or other consenting regimes relevant to basement development, although these should be considered in parallel to planning considerations during design development. These include (but are not limited to):

- Building Regulations
- Highways Act
- Party Wall Act
- Freeholder permission
- Environmental Health
- Housing Act
- Utility providers such as Thames Water
- Environmental Permitting Regulations

Basement Impact Assessments (BIA)

6.5 There are a number of planning policies to be taken into account in the consideration of a proposal for basement development. Together they provide the policy context against which basement development proposals are assessed. In order to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the individual and cumulative impacts of a proposal, all planning applications for basement development should be accompanied by a basement impact assessment (BIA). The purpose of a BIA is to enable the Royal Borough to assess the impact of the development upon the dwelling, neighbouring properties and the environment.

6.6 The level of information required for the basement impact assessment will vary depending on the issues presented by the proposed site. For example, proposed basement development on sites that are sloping, on clay strata, in a highly urbanised area, close to a water course, aquifer, or in a flood zone, are likely to be very complex and the BIA will need to reflect this by addressing each issue and how it will be overcome. In contrast, a basement application that does not face any of these issues would be fairly straight forward in comparison and the BIA would require less detail. The BIA should therefore focus on the individual site context and character rather than follow a generic format.

6.7 Even where planning permission is not required the guidance below can be used as good practice to ensure basements are well designed.

6.8 BIAs should include the following information, responding to the relevant guidance in the subsequent sections:

- whether the site is located above an aquifer and if so how this is likely to impact on the development;
- whether the site is sloping and geology the site is on. If the site is sloping or on clay strata the BIA will need to be more detailed and explain how these issues will be overcome;
- whether the proposed development will extend beneath the water table surface or whether it is located within 100m of a water course;
- an explanation of how the development will impact on flooding and drainage, including what prevention measures will be taken to reduce the risk of flooding of the basement itself and neighbouring properties;
- demonstrate by methodologies appropriate to the site, that schemes maintain the structural stability of the building and neighbouring properties. This must take the form of a Structural Method Statement signed and endorsed by a Chartered Civil Engineer or Chartered Structural Engineer with relevant experience, appointed by the applicant. demonstrate that the proposal does not negatively impact on the character of the area;

- demonstrate that the residential amenity of adjacent occupiers will be respected, particularly during the construction process; and,
- outline what construction methods will be used including how noise, disruption and vibration to neighbouring properties will be minimised. A Construction Management Plan will be required via condition if planning permission is granted.

6.9 Applicants should also consider the impact their proposal may have on infrastructure such as sewers and the transport network. If building over or close to a public sewer, approval would need to be sought from Thames Water. If building close to the road or rail network this should be made clear in your application in order for the Royal Borough to determine whether it is necessary to consult Transport for London (TfL).

Design Considerations

Scale

6.10 The scale of basement development appropriate for a site will depend on a number of factors including but not limited to; the site size and context, the proportion of the site already developed, the proximity to heritage assets such as listed buildings, flood risk, the topography and geology of the site and how the natural environment functions including biodiversity and the location of trees and shrubs. These factors will need to be considered early in the design process.

6.11 The size of a basement should respond to the scale and character of the existing host building and the site and its surrounds. Large basement proposals may be out of keeping with the domestic scale, function and character of its context. Larger scale developments are also more likely to cause adverse impacts for neighbours and their properties.

6.12 Basements should therefore generally be limited to the footprint of the host building in order to remain subordinate in scale. Basements larger than the footprint of the original house are more likely to cause harm to the natural or built environment.

Depth

6.13 Residential basement development should normally be limited to one level below ground level. Two storey basement developments will require more extensive excavation resulting in longer periods of construction and greater numbers of vehicle movements which can impact significantly on adjoining neighbours. Two storey basements could also have a more severe impact on the environment. For example, there is likely to be a greater impact on the ability of the garden to

support trees and vegetation and absorb rainwater resulting in an increased risk of flooding. Two storey basement developments would therefore normally be resisted.

Habitable rooms

6.14 As set out within the flood risk section, habitable rooms within flood zones 3 (such as rooms used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes) will not be permitted at basement level. This includes self-contained basement flats. Basement development containing habitable rooms within flood zone 2 will also not normally be permitted unless evidence clearly demonstrates that flood risk has been mitigated.

6.15 Outside of these areas, where habitable rooms are proposed as part of a basement development, it will be subject to the same standards as other housing in terms of space, outlook, daylight and sunlight. Building regulations require habitable basement accommodation to have an alternative means of escape in the event of fire as well as access to daylight, sunlight, ventilation.

Character and appearance

6.16 Basement development can impact on both character and appearance of the existing or proposed house and neighbouring properties. The external appearance should be sensitively designed to respect the house and respond positively to the character of the area, the streetscape, landscape and surrounding heritage assets. Features such as light wells, railings and steps must be sensitively designed and discreetly located to ensure they do not contribute to visual clutter, introduce features that look out of place or interrupt the prevailing streetscape.

Light wells

6.17 Whilst basements may not be readily visible from the public highway there are certain features such as light wells, skylights, vents and means of fire escape that may be and these should be carefully designed to match the style of the original house and ensure minimum impact on street scene.

6.18 Where basements are not a traditional feature of the street, proposals for basements with light wells to the front of the house will normally be refused.

6.19 The most appropriate location for light wells is to the rear of the property immediately adjacent to the rear elevation as seen in Figure 15.

6.20 Light wells should be as small as possible and not dominate the garden, regardless of whether they are at the front or back of the property. Light well openings set away from buildings within the garden itself, including those for secondary means of escape are likely to be refused because they harm the garden setting and may result in harmful illumination or light spill.

6.21 In order to comply with the building regulations a grille or railings should be designed into the proposed scheme. In front gardens, grilles are the preferred fall protection as they are discreet and less likely to impact on the street scene.

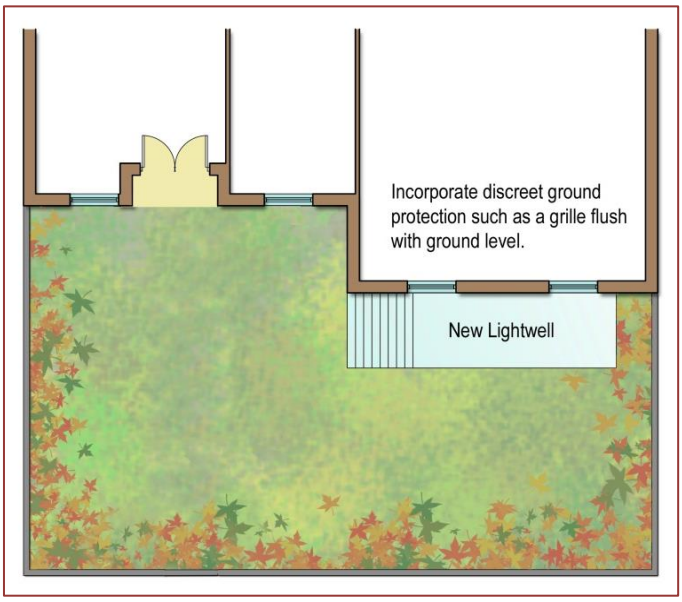


Figure 15 Rear basement light well

6.22 Skylights may be acceptable to the rear of buildings, but as with light wells they should be of minimal size, located adjacent to the rear elevation and flush to any hard landscaping. Skylights may sometimes be more appropriate than light wells, to allow a continuous level between the rear of the building and its garden setting to be maintained.

Landscaping and garden space

6.23 As set out in paragraph 4.22, gardens make a significant contribution to local character and enhance the setting of the building. Basement development associated with new residential accommodation should not result in garden space being lost below the requirements of Policy H5 of the Core Strategy.

6.24 Limiting basements to the footprint of the original house allows enough space for mature trees and vegetation to grow and ensures gardens are able to maintain their biodiversity function as well as contribute to the landscape character of the area.

6.25 Consideration should be given to existing trees on or adjacent to the site and the roots should be protected during construction as per paragraphs 4.31 – 4.33. As with other types of applications, applicants should check whether any trees are covered by tree preservation orders and whether consent in required to undertake works.

Flood risk

6.26 It is important to establish whether there is a significant flood risk before deciding to go ahead with an application for basement excavation or conversion and it should first be determined whether the property is located in a flood risk zone. This can be done via the Environment Agency website. There are different types of flooding that may occur such as flooding from rivers or seas, flooding due to

excess surface water, flooding from sewers and ground water flooding which occurs when water levels underground rise above the normal levels.

6.27 More information on the types and location of flood risk across the borough can be found in the Royal Greenwich Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Appendix F of the SFRA provides guidance on flood risk reduction measures and further information on flooding can be found within the Core Strategy policies.

6.28 Basements used for residential purposes are considered highly vulnerable in terms of flood risk vulnerability (as set out in the Government's planning practice guidance) and will not be permitted in flood zone 3 and will not normally be permitted in flood zone 2 unless it can be proven the risk has been minimised appropriately.

6.29 Sustainable drainage systems (SUDs), such as rain water tanks and permeable surfaces, can be used to reduce flood risk. Applicants will also need to consider the drainage hierarchy in policy 5.13 of the London Plan and if there are practical reasons for not utilising this hierarchy then this must be justified.

6.30 It is also advised that drainage should be fitted with a positive pumped device or other suitable flood prevention device to avoid the risk of sewage backflow causing sewer flooding, which could occur during a storm. The effectiveness of a one way valve can be limited and other flood prevention devices would be preferable.

6.31 In line with Core Strategy policy E3, all basement developments in a high residual risk classification (see figure 8 of the Core Strategy) must be designed to incorporate flood risk reduction measures with the primary aim of reducing risk to life as well as flood damage.

Structural Stability

6.32 Excavation in a dense urban area can be challenging and poor planning and preparation can damage the existing property and the property of neighbours. Structural stability is a material consideration for the Local Planning Authority insofar as the requirement to consider the potential risk and effects a proposal may have upon property, infrastructure and the public, as set out in Planning Practice Guidance. This does not require the Royal Borough to approve a technical solution for a basement development proposal, but rather to confirm that these issues have been sufficiently evaluated and responded to in a design and to ensure that this process has been undertaken by a suitability qualified and experienced professional.

6.33 As set out in paragraph 6.8, all BIAs must include a Structural Method Statement (SMS) signed and endorsed by a Chartered Civil Engineer or Chartered Structural

Engineer with relevant experience. The Royal Borough will rely upon the professional integrity of the qualified and experienced person signing the SMS to ensure that the basement development can be undertaken safely and will safeguard the structural stability of the existing building and other nearby buildings.

6.34 The Association of Specialist Contractors (ASUC) provides Guidelines on Safe and Efficient Basement Construction Directly Below or Near to Existing Structures. It is recommended that the qualified person(s) undertaking the design and construction work have previous experience working in this specific field, and have regard to industry guidance and adopt best practice.

6.35 The SMS should contain the findings of early site investigations, including why the investigations were limited to the area surveyed, and clearly articulate how these findings have influenced the design that is proposed. For example, the presence of clay strata in the subsoil will mean that land instability caused by seasonal shrinkage and expansion is endemic. This may mean that a basement excavation may require neighbouring buildings to be protected by underpinning.

6.36 In some instances it may be appropriate to undertake physical site investigations in addition to survey and desk-based investigations. These instances may include (but are not limited to):

- the site contains a listed buildings or is in close proximity to a listed building
- the site contains existing tree(s), or the proposed basement comes within the Root Protection Area or canopy area of a tree on an adjoining site
- the proposed basement may come into contact with (or close to) an Upper Aquifer
- the site falls within an archaeological priority area
- the site contains or is within close proximity to contaminated land
- the proposed basement is within 8 metres of a main river or 16 metres of the Thames tidal flood defences. (Please note: in this instance a Flood Risk Activity Permit will be required from the Environment Agency under the Environmental Permitting Regulations.)

6.37 The Structural Method Statement should be submitted in the form of a report and supporting drawings that outline the proposed structural engineering general arrangements and details such as underpinning, piled walls, etc. It should convey a clear design process that demonstrates how the proposed design responds to finding of the site-specific survey and investigations undertaken. Specifically, it should set out how designers have addressed:

- ground conditions and ground water
- existing trees and infrastructure
- drainage

- flooding
- vertical and lateral loads
- movements
- integrity of existing structures (including adjoining buildings and more widely where relevant)

6.38 The level of detail required will depend on the site context/constrains and the scale of the basement development proposed, which is a matter of professional judgement made by the qualifying person endorsing the statement. A non-technical summary of the Structural Method Statement is also expected to be provided in a format which can easily be understood by those with no technical knowledge and allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn from the outcomes of the report.

6.39 Complications can sometimes arise during the construction phase and as a result the construction methodology may need to be altered. Building owners are advised to retain the certifying professional endorsing the Structural Method Statement during the construction phase in case problems arise so that they can review the method statement as necessary.

6.40 The Royal Borough may choose to consult (at the expense of the applicant) an independent suitably qualified person to undertake an independent assessment for specific cases where substantive conflicting information has been presented to the planning authority, or where there are any particularly sensitive buildings, trees or other structures within proximity of the site. The decision to seek a third party independent assessment will be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority, and will only be sought in limited circumstances with clear justification.

Managing Construction Impacts

6.41 Basement construction can be complicated, extensive and noisy, making it likely to impact on neighbouring residents. As part of the basement impact assessment the applicant will need to demonstrate how noise disruption and vibration to neighbouring properties will be minimised.

6.42 If planning approval is granted, a Construction Management Plan will be required, and until it is approved, no work may commence. This should provide full details of how adverse impact on neighbours will be reduced.

6.43 Other matters to be addressed in the Construction Management Plan will be required by planning condition. These are likely to include: hours of work, traffic and site access management, dust, noise, vibration management and piling methodology. Applicants should use the quietest form of piling appropriate to the site. Therefore methods such as the continuous flight auger method are likely to be more appropriate than noisier forms of piling such as pile driving.

6.44 In addition, environmental health standards should be adhered to and the Mayor's guidance of 'Control of Dust and Emissions during Construction and Demolition' should be considered.

6.45 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that contractors comply with the terms of conditions. Before work starts, applicants are advised to communicate with neighbours to ensure they are aware of the timetable for the works and any changes to the timetable, when the works are likely to be at their noisiest, how long this will last, and the hours that construction will be taking place.

6.46 It should be noted that the planning system has limited powers to control the construction process and its impacts and whilst a breach of conditions would be dealt with by planning enforcement officers, many other issues would be dealt with through building control or environmental health teams. Therefore, if not in a planning condition, noise, vibration and dust complaints should be directed to environmental health, breach of planning conditions to planning enforcement and construction issues to building control. Information on controlling noise during construction can be found on the Royal Greenwich website.

6.47 The decision letter notifying approval of a planning application for a basement development will be accompanied by necessary pre-commencement conditions on construction management and noise to ensure the impact of the development on neighbours is limited. These conditions must be discharged before work can begin. In addition, some conditions may be post construction conditions; these will need to be signed off once the development is completed.

Conservation matters

Planning applications for basement excavations and associated light-wells in a conservation area will be expected to take account of the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place. In addition, Guidance Notes should be referred to where they are in place for those areas covered by Article 4 Directions.

In areas where basement light-wells are not a traditional or established feature, the excavation required can have a significant impact on the appearance of the house, the streetscape and the character of the conservation area, by enlarging the front elevation and removing part of the front garden. In such cases light-wells are unlikely to be acceptable. This will have implications if it is intended to use the basement as habitable space.

7. Residential Conversions

7.1 If you would like to convert a house into flats you will need planning permission and your application will need to meet the policy requirements set out in the Core Strategy, particularly policy H(b).

7.2 Planning permission will only be granted if the original premises meet the net floor requirements set out in paragraph 7.5 below; the new accommodation is self-contained; car parking, secure access and noise issues have been resolved; and, large family dwellings (3+ bedrooms) have direct access to outdoor amenity space.

7.3 The character and appearance of the converted property should be in keeping with the surrounding area and any extensions should be limited in size and follow the guidance set out in this document.

Conservation matters – listed buildings

The conversion or change of use of a statutory listed building requires consideration to be given not only to the principles and standards outlined in this section, but to whether the proposal would materially affect the special architectural and historic interest of the building. The Royal Borough will seek to achieve schemes that alter the original fabric and room layout of statutory listed buildings as little as possible.

Size

7.4 The Royal Borough's policy is to protect small and medium sized family housing in Royal Greenwich, for which there is a continuing and sustained demand.

7.5 Therefore, planning permission for the conversion of a single house into self-contained flats will not be granted if:

- The original premises has a net floor area of less than 111.48m^2 excluding any garages and existing extensions; or
- The original premises forms part of a terrace and has a net floor area of less than 130m^2 (to measure net floor area, exclude outside walls and floor space with existing headroom of less than 2.3 metres and include partitions, cupboards, chimney breasts or flues as well as the area taken up by any staircases or any external toilet).

Space standards

7.6 Conversions should meet the same minimum space standards as new build homes to ensure a high quality of residential accommodation. The, which incorporates the National Housing Space Standards is the correct standard to use.

Room layout

7.7 As far as possible, rooms in similar use should be placed vertically above one another and side by side, within the same unit or building or adjacent buildings. Internal bathrooms must have some form of internal mechanical ventilation, and consideration must be given to uses of adjacent rooms when locating mechanical equipment, such as washing machines, boilers, extract fans and power showers.

7.8 The arrangement of rooms and sound insulation is particularly important in conversions as there is less flexibility in how each room could be occupied i.e. it would be best to place living rooms above living rooms and bedrooms above bedrooms (see Figure 16).

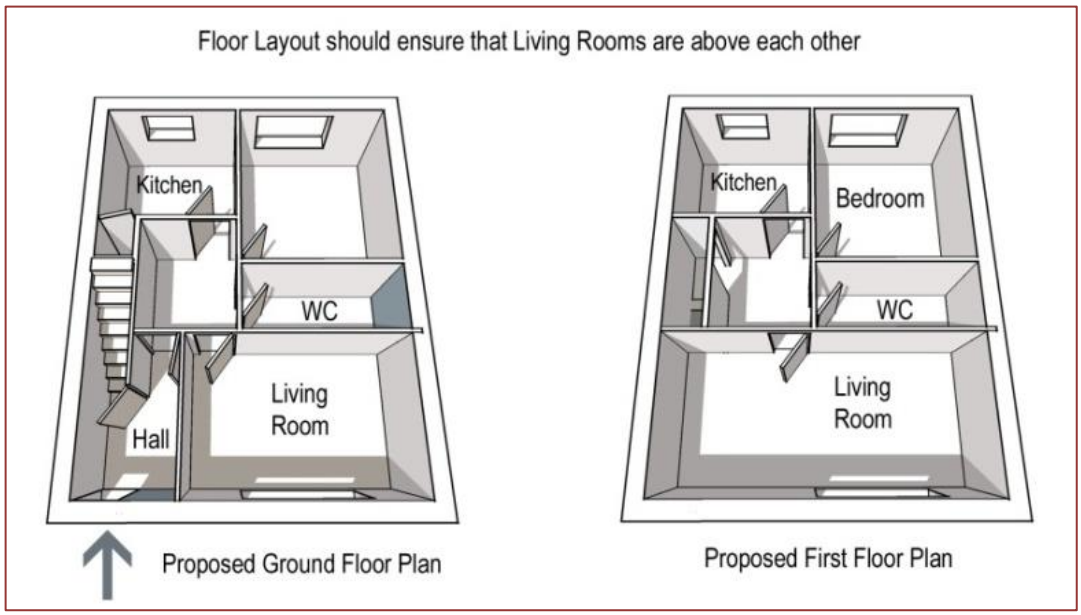


Figure 16 Ideal layout for conversions

7.9 Where possible bedrooms should not be placed above, below or next to potentially noisy rooms, including circulation areas of adjacent dwellings, either within the same building or adjacent buildings, or noisy equipment such as lifts.

Soundproofing

7.10 All dwellings should be built with acoustic insulation and tested to current building regulations standards, but acoustic insulation should not be relied upon as the only means of limiting noise. Minimum levels of sound proofing are set out in approved document E of the building regulations.

Car and cycle parking

7.11 The number of car parking spaces provided should be in line with the standards set out in the London Plan. If a development is proposing to rely on on-street parking the safety and the free flow of traffic and pedestrians should not be

affected. It will be up to the applicant to demonstrate that on street parking is sufficient.

7.12 In areas where there is heavy demand for on street parking within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and there is no ability to provide off street parking, then conversions usually become 'Car Free' and the right to obtain a residents' parking permit is removed.

7.13 Cycle storage should be provided, in line with the requirements of the London Plan. This should be in a secure location at ground floor level.

Access

7.14 In general it is preferable to retain the original front door and provide separate internal front doors to each flat, thereby maintaining the outside appearance of the house and the character of the area (see Figure 17).

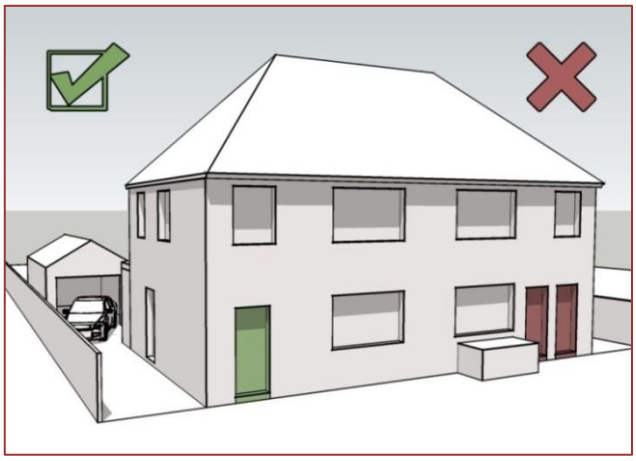


Figure 17 Entrances should be internal

7.15 Shared hallways or lobbies should be well lit and individual flat numbers and letter boxes should be standard fixtures on all internal front doors and flat numbers and door bells should be provided on the main entrance. Contact the Royal Borough's street naming and numbering department to apply for new addresses for the self-contained flats.

7.16 In general, where possible, flats above ground floor level should be approached by way of an internal well lit staircase; external staircases will only be allowed where they do not overlook neighbouring properties.

Refuse and recycling

7.17 It is important to make enough provision for the storage of waste, recycling and compost bins, both internally within kitchens, and externally in an enclosure that is secure and does not obstruct access to the flats. Bins should be stored in a convenient and accessible location, preferably at the side of the property, and should not detract from the appearance of the building in line with Royal Greenwich waste guidance notes on new developments.

Privacy, outlook and amenity space

7.18 Privacy, outlook and amenity space are important to the overall quality and "liveability" of homes and are particularly relevant to dwellings created from conversions, where an original house or a commercial property will be occupied at a higher density as it will be accommodating additional households.

7.19 As set out in policy H5 of the Core Strategy, housing units should have access to a good sized balcony, terrace or communal garden, with family housing units having direct access to a garden. Shared use of existing large gardens will be acceptable provided that visual privacy is protected.

7.20 In communal or shared gardens, suitable screening of the ground floor flats must be provided and the Royal Borough will require screening, sensitive design and planting schemes where appropriate. Extensions and additional units should be avoided where they lead to the loss of communal garden space.

7.21 All habitable rooms should offer a good outlook, including those created through extensions and conversions; including bedrooms (as there is no control over how each room will be used by future occupiers).

Conservation matters

Planning applications for external work associated with a conversion will be expected to take account of the adopted conservation area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) where one is in place. In addition, Guidance Notes should be referred to where they are in place for those areas covered by Article 4 Directions.

A high standard of design for all alterations will be expected. The impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area will be an important consideration when determining proposals for conversions. Particular consideration will be paid to the cumulative impact of such proposals.

Conversions through change of use

7.22 The Government introduced new temporary permitted development rights on 30 May 2013 through the General Permitted Development Order to allow for changes of use from Class B1(a) office to Class C3 residential without the need for planning permission. Further changes were made to the General Permitted Development Order 2014 with regards to permitted development rights for changes of use from shops to residential.

7.23 Since then further amendments have been made to permitted development rights and these are consolidated in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order 2015. Although a full planning application is not required a prior approval application must still be submitted. This includes details of the proposal, site and any other information deemed necessary for the Royal Borough to assess the potential impacts of the development as set out below.

7.24 For all changes of use to residential, a high standard of sustainable design is expected. Applicants are reminded that they must satisfy the standards set out within the building regulations.

7.25 For all change of use applications that require prior approval, existing permitted development rights that apply to houses (Use Class C3) will not apply to new dwellings created following a change of use.

Conservation matters

Permitted development rights for change of use from shops, storage/distribution premises, amusement arcades and casinos do not apply in conservation areas.

Permitted development rights for change of use from office to residential do not apply to statutory listed buildings.

Conversion of offices to residential

7.26 The Royal Borough has an Article 4 Direction in place in Pier Walk/Mitre Passage on Greenwich Peninsula that removes the permitted development right of converting offices to residential use. Planning permission will therefore be required to change the use of these buildings. More information on the exact location of the Article 4 Direction can be found on the Royal Greenwich website.

7.27 Prior to making any change of use, developers must apply to the Royal Borough to determine whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to:

- the impact of the development on transport and highways;
- any contamination risks on the site; and,
- any flooding risks on the site.

7.28 Other aspects of development which may be associated with a change of use, such as alterations to facades, extensions etc. will continue to require planning permission.

Conversions of shops to residential

7.29 The following site constraints will be taken into consideration when assessing a prior approval application for a change of use from shops and financial and professional services (Use Class A1 and A2) to residential (Use Class C3):

- the impact of the development on transport and highways;
- any contamination risks;
- any flooding risks;
- the design and external appearance of the building;
- undesirable impacts on shopping facilities; and,
- up to a maximum of 150m^2 of floor space changing to residential use.

7.30 The effect of the development on the sustainability of key shopping centres and the provision of services will be assessed by the Royal Borough. This enables the local planning authorities to protect valued and successful retail provision in key

shopping areas, such as town centres, while bringing vacant shop units into residential use outside those areas.

7.31 In line with London Plan policy, 'key shopping areas' means primary shopping areas, primary and secondary frontages, and neighbourhood and local centres. Proposals for more than 150m2 of retail space changing to residential use will require planning permission.

Conversion of storage or distribution premises to residential

7.32 A new permitted development right came into force on 15 April 2015 for a three year period, which allows change of use from storage or distribution buildings (Use Class B8) to residential (Use Class C3).

7.33 Up to 500m2 of floor space can change to residential use subject to a prior approval process. As part of this process the following issues will be taken into consideration:

- the impact of the development on transport and highways;
- any air quality impacts on intended occupiers;
- any noise impacts as a result of the development;
- any contamination risks;
- any flooding risk; and,
- the impact the change of use would have on existing industrial uses and/or storage or distribution uses.

7.34 The right only applies to buildings that were last used or were in use as storage or distribution (Use Class B8) on or before 19 March 2014 and have been used for storage or distribution for at least four years prior to any change of use to residential. Proposals for greater than 500m2 of storage/distribution space changing to residential use will require planning permission.

Conversion of amusement arcades and casinos to residential

7.35 Up to 150m2 of floor space can change to residential use subject to a prior approval process; greater than this requires planning permission. The following site constraints will be taken into consideration when assessing a prior approval application for a change of use from amusement arcades/centres and casinos to change to residential (Use Class C3):

- the impact of the development on transport and highways;
- any contamination risks;
- any flooding risk; and,
- the design and external appearance of the building.

8. Houses in Multiple Occupation

What is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)?

8.1 A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is any building or part of a building, such as a flat, where all of the following apply:

- at least three people live there, forming more than one household
- at least one amenity (such as the bathroom, or kitchen facilities) is shared with other tenants
- it is the tenants' main or only home

This includes bedsits and student housing. The Royal Borough operates an HMO Licensing Scheme, which means that all HMOs need to be licensed.

8.2 HMOs are a form of non-self-contained accommodation and generally include a private bedroom with shared living/amenity facilities. Proposals that include self-contained accommodation (where neither kitchen or bathroom facilities are shared), regardless of whether or not additional communal/amenity space is provided, are considered as self-contained accommodation and must therefore comply with the minimum space standards for dwellings set out in Policy 3.5 of the London Plan.

Planning Permission for Small HMOs

8.3 It is important that the Royal Borough supports a range of homes in terms of size and tenure in order to meet a variety of housing need. HMOs that are of a good standard form an important part of the provision of lower cost housing. However, the unmanaged conversion of family housing stock to HMOs can undermine the Royal Borough's objective to meet these varying needs and make it difficult to achieve mixed and balanced communities as set out in the Core Strategy.

8.4 Large HMOs (more than 6 people) are classified as Sui Generis use and have always required planning permission and a mandatory licence from the Royal Borough.

8.5 In 2018, the Royal Borough confirmed an Article 4 Direction which removed the permitted development rights for conversion of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMOs occupied by between three and six unrelated people (use class C4). The Article 4 Direction came into force on 27 September 2018, and from this date those wishing to convert any size of property to an HMO have required planning permission to do so.

Quality Standards for HMOs

8.7 The quality of accommodation provided by HMOs can be poor and can give rise to concern. To be considered good quality, proposals for conversion to an HMO will need to:

- provide sufficient internal space
- provide occupants with a reasonable standard of amenity
- not give rise to significant adverse amenity impacts to the surrounding properties/residential neighbourhood

8.8 The Royal Borough's Standards for HMOs were adopted in 2018. These set out detailed amenity standards as well as additional further requirements relating to the management of the HMO. In all cases, applicants are advised to refer directly to the Standards for HMOs when developing proposals to ensure that they will comply with the licensing requirements.

8.9 Applications for conversion to small HMOs will be considered against the Royal Borough's internal space standards, which are based on the type of accommodation and the type of room. Plans should illustrate the size of each room and the number of people the room is intended to be used by.

Table 2 HMO Minimum Internal Space Standards

Type of Room	Minimum Room Size (sqm)
Single room without kitchen facilities	9sqm
Single room with kitchen facilities	11sqm
Double room without kitchen facilities	12sqm
Double room with kitchen facilities	15sqm

8.9 There is further guidance in the Standards for HMOs relating to other types of accommodation/rooms not include in Table 2 above and also in relation to requirements for kitchen and bathrooms. Compliance with all applicable standards should be demonstrated as part of the planning application.

8.10 In addition to ensuring that proposals provide sufficient internal space, applications will also be considered in terms of the standard of amenity they provide to potential future occupants and the impact on the amenity of the surrounding area. Any planning applications for HMOs should therefore demonstrate how they have complied with the design guidance set out within the Conversions section of this document as well as the relevant Core Strategy policies.

9. Glossary and Bibliography

Word/phrase	Definition
Article 4 Direction	A type of planning control introduced into an area where the permitted development rights have been removed by the local authority to protect the character of the area.
Basement	The storey or storeys of a building that is partly or entirely below ground level.
Building	Includes any part of a building and includes any structure or erection, but does not include mechanical plant or machinery or gates, fences, boundary walls, or other means of enclosure.
Eaves	The eaves are the edges of the roof that overhang the face of a wall and, normally, project beyond the side of a building.
Elevation	A drawing that shows the front, rear or side of the building.
Existing	A building as it existed immediately before any development (e.g. a house extension) is undertaken. The existing house will include previous development to the house, whether undertaken as permitted development or as development resulting from a planning permission from the local authority.
Gable roof	A gable is the triangular portion of the wall between the edges of a roof pitch.
Ground level	The surface of the ground immediately adjacent to the building in question. Where ground level is not uniform (e.g. if the ground is sloping), then the ground level is the highest part of the surface of the ground next to the building.
Habitable room	Any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, living or eating purposes. Enclosed spaces such as bath or toilet facilities, small kitchens, service rooms, corridors, laundries, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces are excluded from this definition.
Height	References to height (for example, the heights of the eaves on a house extension) is the height measured from ground level
Hip end roof	A hip end roof is a roof where all sides slope downwards to the walls (shaped like a pyramid).
House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Housing occupied by individuals of more than one household living together not as a family in non–self-contained accommodation.
Light well	An opening within or next to a building that allows natural light to reach basement windows that would otherwise be obscured.
Locally listed building	A building or structure of architectural or historic interest, which does not qualify for including in the statutory list but in the opinion of the Local Authority makes a valuable contribution to the character of the area.
Mansard roof	A roof in which each face has two slopes, the lower one steeper.

Word/phrase	Definition
Neighbourhood and local centre	Typically serve a localised catchment often most accessible by walking and cycling and include local parades and small clusters of shops, mostly for convenience goods and other services. They may include a small supermarket (typically up to around 500m^2), sub-post office, pharmacy, laundrette and other useful local services. Together with District centres they can play a key role in addressing areas deficient in local retail and other services.
Original house	The house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 (if it was built before this date. Although you may not have extended the house a previous owner may have done so.
Permitted development rights	Permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations to control impact and to protect local amenity.
Primary frontage	Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods.
Prior approval	Prior approval means that approval must be sought from the local planning authority to determine that specified elements of the work are acceptable before proceeding. The matters for prior approval vary depending on the type of development and these are set out in full in the relevant parts in Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order.
Residential amenity	This relates to the level of daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook that allows an occupier to enjoy their own home. Residential amenity does not include 'right to light,' as this is not a planning matter.
Responsible sourcing of materials	Responsible sourcing of construction products is demonstrated through an ethos of supply chain management and product stewardship and encompasses social, economic and environmental dimensions. Responsible sourcing of construction products addresses aspects such as stakeholder engagement, labour practices and the management of supply chains serving materials sectors upstream of the manufacturer.
Roof light (or sky light)	A window, dome, or opening in the roof or ceiling, to admit natural light.
Ridge	The ridge is the highest point on a roof, represented by a horizontal line where two roof areas intersect, running the length of the area.
Roof pitch	Roof pitch is the steepness of the slope of the roof. Roofs may be functionally flat or pitched.
Secondary frontage	Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.
Single family dwelling house	A single family dwelling house is a residence housing one family or household or one that is designed for one family only.

Word/phrase	Definition
Statutory Listed Building	Listed building (Statutory): a building or structure (and any other fixed object within its curtilage) of special architectural or historical interest, which is on the statutory list prepared by the English Heritage. These buildings are protected under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed Building Consent is required for any proposal to alter, extend or demolish the whole or part of the interior or exterior of any structure within the curtilage of that building.
SuDS	Sustainable drainage system. An alternative approach from the traditional ways of managing runoff from buildings and hard standing. Sustainable drainage systems can reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through storm water systems.
Sui generis	Certain uses do not fall within any planning use class and are considered 'sui generis.' Such uses include: betting offices/shops, pay day loan shops, theatres, houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards, petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles, retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, launderettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres and casinos.

Figure No.	Source
1	London Borough of Hounslow Residential Extensions Guidelines 2003
2	Bere Architects