

Loft Conversions

Building Regulation Guidance Note

Loft conversions are a popular way to create space within the existing building envelope.

It is important to recognise that loft conversions have additional restriction placed upon them and are more complicated to build than simple extensions added to an existing building.

Loft conversions do not lend themselves easily to 'do it yourself' schemes unless the person carrying out the scheme is very competent in building work.

Structure

- Are adequate load bearing walls and foundations in existence to take the additional loads of the new floor and any roof alterations?
- Are lintels adequate?
- Existing roof? Is it traditional or trussed rafter? This is likely to have a direct bearing on the practicability and design.
- Can the existing construction and the new construction be proved to be stable? Structural calculations may well be required.

Fire (Means of Escape)

- **Provision for a protected route out**

The new upper storey must be served by a protected staircase enclosure having a minimum 30-minute fire resisting construction and the enclosure should either:

- Extend to a final exit, or
- Give access to at least two escape routes at ground level, each delivering to final exits and separated from each other by fire resisting construction.

- **Doorways**

Any new door forming the protected escape route protection will have to be a FD20 resisting door and all existing doors on the escape route, including bathroom doors need to be replaced with FD20 fire doors and might involve the removal and replacement of door frames to accommodate and achieve the appropriate fire standard. Intumescent seals or specialist linings for traditional doors are required.

There is no requirement for these doors to have self-closers fitted but if you are a builder or architect you are advised to inform your client of the importance of managing these fire doors i.e. keeping them shut etc.

- **Glazing**

Any glazing in the enclosure to the existing/new stair, including all fire doors is required to be 30 minute fire resisting glass.

- **Fire Separation floors**

The existing first floor construction would also normally have to be upgraded to a full 30-minute standard construction (which could mean under drawing the existing ceilings). However this can be avoided if the following conditions are satisfied:

- Only one storey is to be added and the total storey floor area is not more than 50m²; and
- The storey contains no more than two rooms; and
- Floors, which separate rooms from the protected escape route/circulation spaces, are upgraded to or achieve a full 30-minute fire resistant standard.

- **Smoke Alarms**

Mains powered and battery backed up smoke detectors must be installed on each storey in accordance with BS5839-6: 2004 – Grade D – category LD3 standard.

All detectors must be interlinked together so that all sound even if one is triggered and must be placed in circulation space/protected stairway within 7.5m of every habitable room door. If however due to the layout of the loft there is no circulation space, a smoke detector should be fitted in the room itself.

Staircases

The new storey should be served by a staircase and the following should be considered:

- Rise and going of treads;
- Headroom height above pitch of stairs;
- Headroom height above landings;
- Handrails, guarding and balustrading.

See advisory leaflet on Stairs to Dwellings.

Loft Used as Storage Areas

Some lofts are converted to provide a storage area and it is sometimes assumed that no permission is required.

However, if the storage area in the loft is capable of being used as a living area or increase the loading on the existing roof then a Building Regulation submission is required. In such cases, before any work is carried out you

should check with us and we will be happy to advise you on any requirements.

General Advice

Some lofts are already converted for storage by previous occupants and you may wish to change the loft to some other use in which case this also may require a Building Regulation application. For any informal advice on loft conversion, the Building Control Section would be pleased to assist you. Please ring Darlington (01325 406214) and ask for a Building Control Surveyor.

Although there are no restrictions on preparing plans you are advised that because of the complex nature of conversions professional advice should be sought.

Translation Information

If English is not your first language and you would like more information about this document, or if you require information in large print or Braille or on tape, please contact (01325) 406214.

اگر آپ کو یہ کتابچہ انگریزی کے علاوہ کسی دوسری زبان میں
درکار ہو تو براہ مہربانی ٹیلیفون نمبر 01325 406214
پر فون کر کے حوالہ نمبر بتائیں۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ
ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨੰਬਰ 01325 406214
ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ (ਹਵਾਲਾ) ਨੰਬਰ ਦੱਸੋ।

यदि आप यह प्रकाशन अंग्रेजी के अलावा अन्य भाषा
में चाहते हैं तो कृपया संदर्भ नम्बर (रेफरन्स नम्बर)
बताकर निम्नलिखित 01325 406214 पर संपर्क करें।

如果你需要其它語言的版本，請與以
下電話聯係並報出參考號碼： 01325 406214

यदि आपनार इशरेजी छाड़ा अन्य कोन भाषा एइ
प्रकाशनाटिर दरकार बाके, भाइले 01325 406214
नम्बरे फोन करेन एवम् सूत्र नम्बर उल्लेख करेन।

إذا رغبتكم الحصول على هذه النشرة
بلغة أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية نرجو
الاتصال بنا على رقم الهاتف التالي
01325 406214 مع ذكر رقم الإشارة.

Email: buildingcontrolenquiries@darlington.gov.uk