

Bed & Breakfast and Hostel Accommodation

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance note is to advise applicants and their agents of the Council's recommended standards for bed & breakfast and hostel accommodation. These standards were adopted by the City Council in April 1996. The guidance note also supplements the Policy H7 (Conversion of Buildings) in the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan.

For the purposes of this guidance, the terms 'bed & breakfast' and 'hostel' refer to short to medium term accommodation for persons without an alternative place of residence, or for visitors to the City.

Although bed & breakfast and hostel uses are a form of multiple occupation, they are substantially different from other forms of shared accommodation, and different criteria apply when determining whether planning permission should be granted.

Bed and breakfast accommodation is classified as being within Use Class C1 (Hotel) under the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. A hostel use is regarded as being outside a specified Use Class ("sui generis"). Planning permission is therefore required to convert from any other use (including other types of residential accommodation) to bed and breakfast or hostel use, and to change between these uses.

Whilst it remains the Council preference to see self contained housing accommodation provided wherever possible, it acknowledges the significant contribution which other uses can make to the provision of affordable or short term accommodation in the City. This is provided that satisfactory standards of accommodation (including indoor and outdoor space and amenity requirements, noise insulation, parking provision, health and safety regulations, access, etc.) are achieved by such development, and that its impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties is minimised.

The granting of planning permission for a development may be conditional upon specification of the maximum number of

occupants to be accommodated in the property, in order that related requirements of provision of amenities, safety, etc. can be achieved.

The Council has formulated a corporate policy and Code of Practice to guide the development and management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's), to which applicants should have regard (see back page). The standards in this Code of Practice are in line with Government guidance in DoE Circular 12/92 and 12/93.

This note provides guidance principally on those standards for bed & breakfast and hostel accommodation which relate to town planning regulations. Guidance on other standards - including building control and environmental health regulations - is available from the Code of Practice and the relevant Council Services (see back page). It is strongly advised that all such aspects of proposals are discussed in advance of a formal planning application.

Suitable Premises

1. Bed and breakfast and hostel uses should be located in large detached or semi-detached properties. Applications for such uses in terraced properties are unlikely to be approved, due to the restricted size of such properties and the possible noise and traffic impact upon nearby occupiers.

2. Bed and breakfast and hostel applications will not be acceptable in areas of predominantly single family dwellings. However, decisions on such applications will depend upon the particular characteristics of each scheme, and its impact on the amenity and character of the neighbourhood. Factors taken into account in determining applications will include:

- the size of the development,
- the number of bedspaces,
- its proximity to nearby properties, and
- provision of satisfactory off-street car parking facilities.

3. The upper floors of business premises within commercial areas, including the City Centre may be acceptable, subject to other relevant planning policies. Conversion of entire business premises may also be acceptable in the City Centre.

4. Where a property is being converted, schemes should be contained within the existing building envelope, or if substantial demolition of outriggers, etc. is involved, within a similar gross floorspace to that existing. Any extensions proposed will be considered on the basis of the Council's general policy in relation to house extensions (see SPG Note 1 : House Extensions), and also whether any increases in density arising from extensions to the property will be acceptable given the availability of amenity space and parking.

Internal Spaces

5. The following are the minimum bedroom sizes that will be acceptable for bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation. They are taken from the Council's Code of Practice for Houses in Multiple Occupation and applicants should refer to this document for guidance on other accommodation and amenities to be provided. It is available from the Environmental Health Service (see address on back page).

- 1 person rooms should be a minimum of 8.5 square metres
- 2 person rooms should be a minimum of 11 square metres
- 3 person rooms should be a minimum of 15 square metres
- 4 person rooms should be a minimum of 19.5 square metres.

6. The development will be expected to include a communal lounge area. This should be a minimum of 12 square metres in area and would have a minimum width of 3 metres in order to provide an acceptable standard of amenity for residents. Where such a lounge caters for more than 4 residents then it should provide a minimum area of 3 square metres per person. If residents share a separate communal dining area or a combined lounge or dining area then this should have a minimum area of 4 square metres per resident.

7. The arrangement and shape of rooms should aim to maximise the amenity of occupants e.g. living rooms should be near kitchens, and should be at least 3 metres wide at their narrowest point and should have a window providing light ventilation and a view in order to provide an acceptable standard of amenity for residents. Long narrow passageways and corridors should be avoided and internal kitchens are unacceptable.

8. Living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms should avoid overlooking adjoining properties and facing towards nearby high boundary walls. This is particularly important where it is proposed to locate living room or bedroom windows to the rear of properties or in outbuildings.

9. The vertical arrangement of layouts should ensure that bedrooms are not located above or under living areas, kitchens, or wc's unless a suitable scheme of acoustic insulation is proposed.

10. The provision of adequate acoustic insulation to reduce the transmission of sound between floors and ceilings must be included in the design stage of all conversion schemes, in order to minimise the disturbance caused by impact sound and noise from hi-fi systems, T.V.'s, etc. The inclusion of acoustic insulation to party walls is also desirable (see back page).

11. Partitions, if used, should not cut across windows. Ceiling height reductions should not be visible externally.

12. Careful attention should be paid to both internal and external features of buildings "listed" for their architectural/historic merit, or buildings within the City Council's designated conservation areas. For example, room proportions, decorative ceilings, sash windows and external mouldings must be retained in all conversion schemes. Design requirements will vary from scheme to scheme, but the conversion of listed buildings requires particular skill and the appointment of architects is always advised (see back page).

13. Basements are not acceptable for use as habitable rooms (kitchens, living rooms & bedrooms) if the finished floor level within a basement is to be more than 1 metre below the existing outside level. If the finished floor level exceeds this depth then the basements should only be used for storage, or for bathrooms in conjunction with floors above, but not for habitable rooms. Excavation works to achieve this

level are not normally acceptable. Other statutory requirements apply to the suitability of basement rooms, and it will be necessary to ensure compliance with these at the earliest design stage (see back page).

14. Roof spaces should be large enough to convert without the excessive use of dormers. Where necessary, dormers should preferably be located at the rear of buildings and should not be continuous over the full frontage or result in the overlooking of adjacent or nearby properties. Where dormers are to be provided at the front, they should be designed to respect the existing building in terms of size, scale, positioning and materials.

15. Roof lights (skylight windows) should be at normal sill level if they are the only windows to a room. Living rooms, kitchens and main bedrooms should not be lit solely by roof light as they do not provide a satisfactory level of amenity. (Further information on the use of roof lights as secondary means of escape can be obtained from the Building Surveying & Licensing, at the address on the back page).

External Spaces

16. All units should be provided with adequate rear amenity space. Access to yards or gardens should be provided for all units (including those above shops), without resorting to external staircases which invariably cause problems of overlooking and security, and which can be dangerous in icy or bad weather.

17. Primary access to accommodation by way of rear passageways is unacceptable, unless such rear passageways are wide, well lit and already used extensively for this purpose. In the case of accommodation above terraced shops or businesses where primary access from the rear is not acceptable, a separate means of access within the shop business frontage should be provided.

18. Where a shop is narrow fronted and a separate primary access is difficult to achieve, a comprehensive scheme involving more than one unit in a block may have to be undertaken to secure a satisfactory solution. In all cases a secondary access to the rear must be provided (see back page).

19. Bin storage should be provided externally within the curtilage of the site, within a suitably designed structure. Bin storage should not be

located adjacent to habitable room windows. Details should be included in all applications.

20. Details of landscaping proposals should be included in all applications. Proposals must reflect and enhance the general landscape character of the property and neighbourhood. The excessive use of hard landscaping should be avoided, and arrangements should be made for the future maintenance of landscape and grassed areas.

21. Bed & breakfast and hostel developments should be capable of providing off-street car parking at an operational minimum of 1 space per residential member of staff and 1 space per 10 bedspaces. The maximum parking that should be provided for is 1 space per residential member of staff and 1 space per 5 bedspaces. Where no off-street parking provision can be made available then the effect of the proposed development upon parking in the vicinity of the site will be carefully considered to ensure that there will be no significant impact upon residential amenity.

22. 1 cycle stand per 4 bedrooms for staff and visitors should also be provided.

Further advice

Properly drawn scale plans, including existing and proposed floor layouts, elevational details and sections through roof spaces and basements (if used as habitable rooms) are required at the outset, for all applications. Qualified architectural advice is money well spent.

For further advice, particularly regarding:

- the requirement for planning permission
- the submission of sketch proposals;
- the possible need for Listed Building Consent / Conservation Area Consent and ;
- the suitability of basement rooms, applicants should contact:

Planning, Transportation & Building Surveying Service
2nd Floor Millennium House
60 Victoria Street
Liverpool. L1 6JF
Tel: 0151 233 5671/5672

For further advice regarding the fitness standard and the Council's Code of Practice for HMO's, applicants should contact:

Environmental Health & Trading Standards
PO Box 858
Kingsway House
Hatton Garden
Liverpool. L69 3YD
Tel: 0151 225 4016/7/8

For further advice regarding:

- installation of noise insulation measures;
- the use of roof lights as a secondary means of escape and;
- satisfactory means of escape in the event of fire,

applicants should also contact

the Planning, Transportation & Building
Surveying Service
Tel: 0151-233-4479

For further advice, regarding the eligibility of professional fees for Renovation Grant Programme, applicants should contact:

Housing & Consumer Service Directorate
Urban Renewal Service
Grd Floor Millennium House
60 Victoria Street
Liverpool. L1 6JF
Tel: 0151 233 4254