

Residential Conversions

4.11 The conversion of single dwellings into more dwellings or the redevelopment of dwellings into new blocks of flats can enable more effective use of sites to be achieved. However, this type of development must seek to enhance the local character of the area. In recent years, large concentrations of flats have resulted in a range of problems, including increased on-street parking and resultant congestion on roads, the loss of front gardens, reductions in privacy, significant changes to the street scene, and loss of family accommodation.

4.12 Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions and Redevelopment aims to address these issues by controlling the number of residential conversions and the size of the original residential units from which conversions are achieved. Policy DMH 5: Houses in Multiple Occupation specifically deals with the conversion of properties into Houses in Multiple Occupation, hostels and secure accommodation.

Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions and Redevelopment

Residential conversions and the redevelopment of dwellings into new blocks of flats will only be permitted where:

- i) it is on a residential street where the proposal will not result in more than 10% of properties being redeveloped into flats;**
- ii) On residential streets longer than 1km the proposed redevelopment site should be taken as the midpoint of a 1km length of road for assessment purposes;**
- iii) the internal floor area of the original building to be converted is at least 120 sqm; and**
- iv) units are limited to one unit per floor for residential conversions.**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), hostels and secure accommodation

4.13 Large homes in multiple occupation (HMOs) and hostels can contribute to the overall supply of cheaper accommodation, particularly for students, young people and those on low income.

4.14 Intensive occupation of former family dwellings such as those used for student accommodation or as a HMO can have negative impacts on residential amenity within an area through increases in on-street and off-street parking, loss of front gardens, reductions in levels of privacy, alterations to the

exterior of buildings and increased generation of refuse. There are significant concentrations of HMOs in the Uxbridge South and Brunel Ward, where an Article 4 Direction has been imposed removing permitted development rights for HMO accommodation.

Policy DMH 5: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Student Accommodation

A) In all parts of the Borough

Proposals for the provision of large HMOs, residential hostels, student accommodation and secure accommodation will be required to demonstrate that:

- i) there is good accessibility to local amenities and public transport;
- ii) they accord with the Accessible Homes standards and provide satisfactory living conditions for the intended occupiers; and
- iii) there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties or the character of the area.

B) In wards covered by an Article 4 Direction for HMOs

Planning applications for the change of use from dwelling house (Use Class C3) to HMO (Use Class C4 and Sui Generis) will only be permitted:

- i) where it is in a neighbourhood area where less than 20% of properties are or would be exempt from paying council tax (or in the case of Conservation Areas 10%) because they are entirely occupied by full time students, recorded on the Council's database as a licensed HMO, benefit from C4/Sui Generis HMO planning consent and are known to the Council to be HMOs;
- ii) in Conservation Areas where less than 10% of properties are exempt from paying council tax because they are entirely occupied by full time students, recorded on the Council's database as a licensed HMO, benefit from C4/Sui Generis HMO planning consent and are known to the Council to be HMOs and the change of use does not form a consecutive HMO use in a street frontage;
- iii) where less than 15% of properties within 100 metres of a street length either side of an application property are exempt from paying council tax because they are entirely occupied by full time students, recorded on the Council's database as a licensed HMO, benefit from C4/Sui Generis HMO planning consent and are known to the Council to be HMOs; and
- iv) where the accommodation complies with all other planning standards relating to car parking, waste storage, retention of

amenity space and garages and will not have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining properties.

Garden and Backland Development

4.15 In general, the Council will not accept proposals for developments on garden land but proposals for development of backland sites in other uses will be considered subject to the criteria in Policy DMH 6: Garden and Backland Development and other relevant policies.

4.16 The restrictive approach reflects the direct and indirect value of gardens which contribute to local character, provide safe and secure amenity and play space, support biodiversity, help to reduce flood risk and mitigate the effects of climate change, including the 'heat island' effect.

4.17 The London Plan recognises the contribution of gardens (especially back gardens) and suggests a presumption against their loss where it can be locally justified.

4.18 In addition, the Council's Townscape Character Study produced in November 2013 notes the contribution that front gardens make to local character. The Council will take account of the conclusions of the Study when assessing proposals that involve the loss of front gardens in certain character areas.

Policy DMH 6: Garden and Backland Development

There is a presumption against the loss of gardens due to the need to maintain local character, amenity space and biodiversity. In exceptional cases a limited scale of backland development may be acceptable, subject to the following criteria:

- i) neighbouring residential amenity and privacy of existing homes and gardens must be maintained and unacceptable light spillage avoided;**
- ii) vehicular access or car parking should not have an adverse impact on neighbours in terms of noise or light. Access roads between dwellings and unnecessarily long access roads will not normally be acceptable;**
- iii) development on backland sites must be more intimate in mass and scale and lower than frontage properties; and**
- iv) features such as trees, shrubs and wildlife habitat must be retained or re-provided.**