

B L A C K P O O L C O U N C I L



Supplementary Planning Guidance 10: Change of use of Holiday Accommodation & Conversion of Properties to Permanent Residential use & Holiday Flats

June 1999



2004-2005
Benefits Administration



Blackpool Council
BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY FOR ALL

This Supplementary Planning Guidance Note has been adopted by the Council and will be considered as a material planning consideration in determining relevant planning applications, supporting the policies set out in the Council's Local Plan.

The Guidance will be saved for a further 3 years after a new Blackpool Local Plan is adopted (expected to be in 2006).

The Guidance will in due course be reviewed under the new planning system (of a 'Local Development Framework' of planning documents supported by Supplementary Planning Documents).

Change of use of holiday accommodation & conversion of properties to permanent residential use & holiday flats

Blackpool is having to adjust to changing demands and preferences in the holiday markets. This painful process is releasing many former Guest Houses and Hotels for use as permanent living accommodation. Often this change takes place in two steps - firstly from Hotel or Guest House to Holiday Flats, and then to permanent residential use.

The Council recognises that many premises no longer provide viable holiday accommodation and that new predominantly residential neighbourhoods are forming in traditional holiday areas. To ensure that these neighbourhoods contain good quality living accommodation that will prove attractive to a wide range of household types, the Council has prepared specific policy guidance relating to living space, indoor and outdoor amenities and facilities for refuse storage and car parking. This new Guidance also re-affirms the Council's intention to seek to protect the remaining concentrations of holiday accommodation from future land-use change.

Blackpool already contains a large reservoir of low standard accommodation where there is sharing of basic facilities and internal circulation space. The Council does not wish to see any expansion of this type of accommodation. It will therefore seek to apply the Guidance set out below to all future proposals that seek to change existing buildings into permanent residential accommodation or Holiday Flats. This approach will ensure that many more conversion schemes are subject to the Building Regulations and to higher standards relating to sound and thermal insulation, heating, ventilation and means of escape from fire.

This new Guidance supplements existing policies in the Blackpool Borough Local Plan. It will be used in the determination of planning applications and aims to encourage good practice in the design and layout of accommodation in schemes of building conversion.

In this Guidance the following definitions apply throughout: -

* **Self-Contained:** A self-contained unit of accommodation is residential accommodation entered by its own door leading directly off the street or off a common entrance hall, providing a minimum of 1 habitable room, a kitchen, and the exclusive use of an inside bath or shower, wash basin and toilet.

* **Dwelling Unit:** All rooms, internal circulation and storage space and other internal facilities taken together to form one flat, which will be used exclusively by either a single occupant or group of people living as a single household. A single converted property may therefore consist of more than

one dwelling unit.

* **Habitable Room:** A room such as a living room, dining room or bedroom intended for sitting, sleeping and/or leisure purposes. The term excludes purely working kitchens, utility rooms, bathroom or toilet, and storage and circulation space.

* **Bedsitting Room:** A room which combines the living area with the sleeping area (but not the kitchen).

* **Net Floor Area:** The area enclosed by the walls (i.e. internal measurements), including cupboards which can be entered from within the room.

* **Gross Floor Area:** The combined total area of each floor of the building, including all internal and external walls and approved extensions.

* **Outbuildings:** Any constructions within the curtilage of the property that are ancillary to the main building (such as sheds, outdoor toilets, etc.), excluding approved extensions.

Local Plan Policies

The main existing Local Plan policies relevant to changes of use from holiday accommodation to multiple residential use are: -

T8 To safeguard the character of the main holiday areas defined on the proposals map. Development proposals which significantly conflict with or undermine their character will not be permitted.

T13 Developments which would have an adverse effect on the amenities and living conditions of residents and people staying in holiday areas will not be permitted.

H8 Applications for the sub-division of existing dwellings for residential use will be considered having regard to the site, type of property, amenity, highway and parking considerations. Proposals which would have an adverse effect on the existing character of an area will not be permitted.

The above policies make reference to the kind of considerations on which decisions have been based - location, type of property, uses in the immediate surrounding area, traffic, parking and amenity considerations - but provide no detailed guidance on these issues.

Policies T8, T13 and H8 remain valid. Decisions on planning applications relating to changes of use from holiday accommodation and conversions to residential use need to be taken in accordance with these policies, making a subjective assessment of the impact of a development on the character of and amenities of the area.

In the seven years since the base date of the Local Plan (1991) there has been a substantial decline in the amount of holiday accommodation and increasing demand for the conversion of properties to multiple residential use, either as self-contained flats or houses in multiple occupancy. In order to provide firmer policy guidance on which locations further changes of use from holiday accommodation will or will not be acceptable, and on the standards of accommodation to be provided in converted properties, additional, more detailed guidance is set out below. This will be used to assist in the future determination of planning applications for conversions to residential use.

The Change of Use of Properties from Holiday Accommodation: Locational Guidance

Locationally, the Local Plan Policies T8, T13 and H8 seek to safeguard holiday accommodation as the main use within the main holiday areas, but encourage conversions to residential use elsewhere.

The impact of decline on holiday accommodation uses has been within as well as outside the main holiday areas. A two-tiered approach remains relevant, but more precise Locational Guidance is set out below to be applied by the Council in their normal determination of where proposed changes of use from holiday accommodation are to be permitted: -

Local Plan Main Holiday Areas

- A. Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of holiday accommodation for permanent residential use will not be permitted in areas where holiday accommodation remains the dominant use.
- B. Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of holiday accommodation premises for permanent residential use will only be permitted either:
- where there are already permanent residential uses directly adjoining or abutting both sides of the proposed development.
 - where there is already permanent residential use on one side of the proposed development and some incidence of such uses in the immediate vicinity.

or

- Where there is a substantial concentration of permanent residential uses.

Elsewhere

- C. Outside the main holiday areas the change of use from holiday accommodation to permanent residential use will be permitted.

The above policy guidance will be used to establish the broad principle of whether in locational terms a change of use would be permissible without significantly conflicting with the existing character of different parts of the main holiday area. The main streets and terraces of properties which remain in holiday accommodation use would be fully safeguarded and no changes of use permitted.

Where in principle the proposed change of use of properties to permanent residential use is permissible, the additional policy guidance set out below will be used to control the more detailed design and layout of properties.

Density of Development and Standards of Accommodation

The decline in holiday accommodation and increasing demand for low cost rented accommodation have together resulted in a large increase in the number of properties converted into permanent residential flats or other forms of shared housing in multiple use.

The supply of such accommodation is considered to exceed locally generated demand and the Council is concerned that the surplus capacity is attracting large numbers from outside the area, particularly the young and unemployed. Much of the resulting accommodation is of poor quality and combined with high residential densities has led to a deterioration in the character of residential and holiday areas.

The layout and size of rooms of many properties converted during the 1980s and 1990s has had an unacceptable impact on the environment of the inner areas, and there are related problems of poor maintenance, noise and disturbance and traffic congestion. These concerns are most focussed on the inner area of Blackpool as defined on the attached plan (at the rear of this Guidance), comprising most of Claremont, Talbot, Foxhall and Alexandra wards and extending from Gynn Square to the Pleasure Beach.

In order to redress or at least not further intensify high densities of accommodation and to avoid spreading the problem to other areas, all future applications for the further sub-division or conversion of premises to residential use to accord with Policies T8, T13 and H8 of the Local Plan will also need to comply with the following supplementary guidance.

While their focus is to address the problems of the inner areas, most of the requirements appropriately apply across the Borough as a whole, including to new-build developments. It is essential to ensure that minimum standards for new flat developments are at least in line with the standards required for converted properties. The standards will also be relevantly applied to conversions to Holiday Flats.

- D. subject to conforming with the locational guidance (a-c), new development or the sub-division or conversion of properties for permanent residential use or use as holiday flats will only be permitted subject to the following criteria: -

Blackpool's Inner Area

- No sub-division will be permitted of properties with a gross floor area of less than 110 sq.m. (excluding outbuildings).
- No proposals will be permitted which require any significant extension or expansion of the existing building.

Throughout the Borough

New development or the sub-division or conversion of existing properties will only be permitted where proposed developments comply with the following requirements: -

- proposals provide fully self-contained accommodation (comprising bedroom/living accommodation with the exclusive use of kitchen, bath or shower, wash Basin and toilet).
- Proposals are consistent with the Council's floorspace standards for flat accommodation as set out in this guidance.
- Where any external alterations to the existing building can be provided without detriment to the appearance of the property, or the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- Where arrangements are made for the provision of a garden/amenity area for residents' use in accordance with the amenity space standards as set out in this guidance.
- Where arrangements are made for adequate parking in accordance with the Council's parking standards as set out in this guidance.
- Where SOUNDPROOFING to accord with the requirements of the building regulations is provided to minimise disturbance to neighbouring properties and between separate units of accommodation.

All these criteria aim to reflect the realities of a declining holiday market. Where there is no longer justification for safeguarding holiday accommodation use, the criteria seek to ensure that any changes to permanent residential use do not result in over-intensive occupation contrary to the character and amenities of the main holiday areas and to the achievement of suitable living conditions for residents. The requirements will also relevantly be applied to Holiday Flat developments with better standards of accommodation being equally appropriate for staying holiday-makers if the resort is to retain its appeal and meet the higher expectations of modern visitors.

In order that the Council can take all these factors into account when considering proposals, applicants will need to supply information on numbers of flats, room sizes, soundproofing, storage facilities, parking arrangements and future maintenance of common and amenity areas. This will allow the Council to consider such issues as the standard of accommodation and over-intensive use of the site. Further, more specific guidance on the above considerations is set out below.

Size of Unit

In order to protect the residential character of inner housing areas and to resist further over-intensive development, the Council will seek to retain properties most suited to family accommodation as single family dwellings. No conversions and further sub-division of properties with a gross floor area of less than 110 sq.m. will be permitted in the defined inner areas of the Borough, which will normally equate to properties of 4 or less bedrooms.

Floorspace Standards

As specified, only applications for conversion which are fully self-contained will be permitted. All new units of self-contained accommodation must provide a minimum of 1 habitable room, a kitchen, and the exclusive use of an inside bath or shower, wash basin and toilet, and circulation and storage space.

Minimum room sizes as set out below will be required in order to satisfy the Council's standards and result in satisfactory facilities and a standard of amenity which residents reasonably expect to enjoy. The standards will also normally result in 1 flat per floor.

1. Self-contained accommodation with separate rooms

Room	Net Floor Area	(sq. metres)
Living Room		23 (minimum total for these two rooms)*
Main Bedroom		
Kitchen		4.65
Additional Bedroom		8

* Minimum of 10 sq.m. per room

2. Self-contained single-person accommodation with a combined living/sleeping area or combined living/kitchen area

Living/Sleeping Area	16
Separate Kitchen	4.65
or	
Living Room/Kitchen	16
Separate Bedroom	10

Accommodation with combined facilities (Option 2) must account for no more than 33% of gross floor area (with a maximum of 2 units per property).

Layout

In addition to the conditions of planning permission, conversions must comply with the Housing Act 1985, and also with the Building Regulations. This legislation covers detailed specifications and the applicant must therefore ensure that the criteria set out below will be satisfied by the proposed conversion: -

1. All dwelling units are to be self-contained with their own individual entrance doors which lead directly off the street or off a common entrance hall, and must provide direct access to back gardens/amenity areas. (B & P)
2. Adequate sound insulation measures should be provided. (B & P)
3. External refuse storage space must be provided within the curtilage at the side or rear of the property, and be of sufficient size to accommodate 1 dustbin per unit. (P)
4. The parking area must be suitably landscaped. (P)
5. All flats must provide a satisfactory layout to provide a safe means of escape from fire. (B)
6. All flats should have an automatic fire detection and alarm system. (B)
7. Corridors and stairs should have a minimum clear width of 0.8m. (B)
8. Kitchens must be adequately ventilated either direct to outside air (preferred option) or mechanically via an extractor fan. (B)
9. All kitchens should have adequate space for a sink, cooker, fridge, and working surface. (EH)

Key- P: Planning Requirements; B: Building Regs Requirements; EH: Environmental Health Requirements.

Relevant contact addresses and telephone numbers for advice on all of the above matters are set out at the rear of this Guidance.

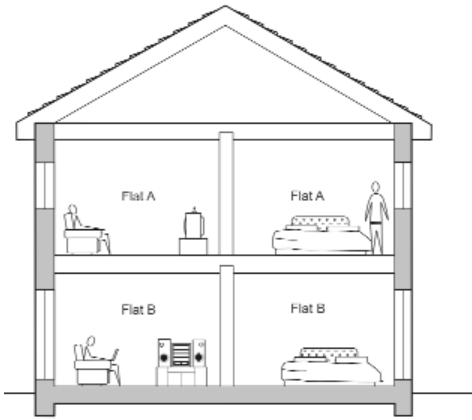
In addition, although not Building Regulations requirements, the Council will seek to encourage conversion schemes which provide improved access and facilities for the disabled.

Internal Layout: Practical Examples

The Council requires high standards of design and layout in all new developments. The subdivision of a single property invariably results in an intensification of use and often an increase in noise levels causing disturbance to neighbours and other occupiers. To address such problems, and be supportive of the requirements on developers to meet the various regulations, wherever possible the Council will seek to encourage the application of the following principles relating to the better internal arrangement of rooms to achieve a satisfactory conversion: -

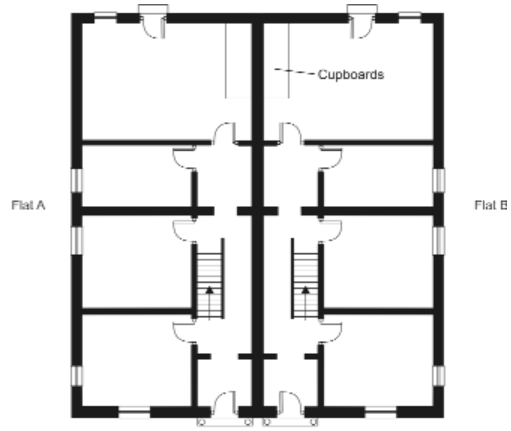
- Problems of noise nuisance between proposed flats should be minimised by giving careful thought to the internal room layout. It is desirable to position rooms with a similar use above and below one another ("stacking"), i.e. bedroom above bedroom, kitchen above kitchen, etc. This helps contain noise problems and allows for efficient plumbing and other services.
- The internal room arrangement should be made compatible with any adjoining property by placing rooms of similar uses beside each other. Non-habitable rooms within flats such as halls can also be used as "buffer zones."

SPG10: Change of use of holiday accommodation & conversion of properties to permanent residential use & holiday flats



'Stacking': Try to position rooms with a similar use above and below each other in order to minimise noise disturbance

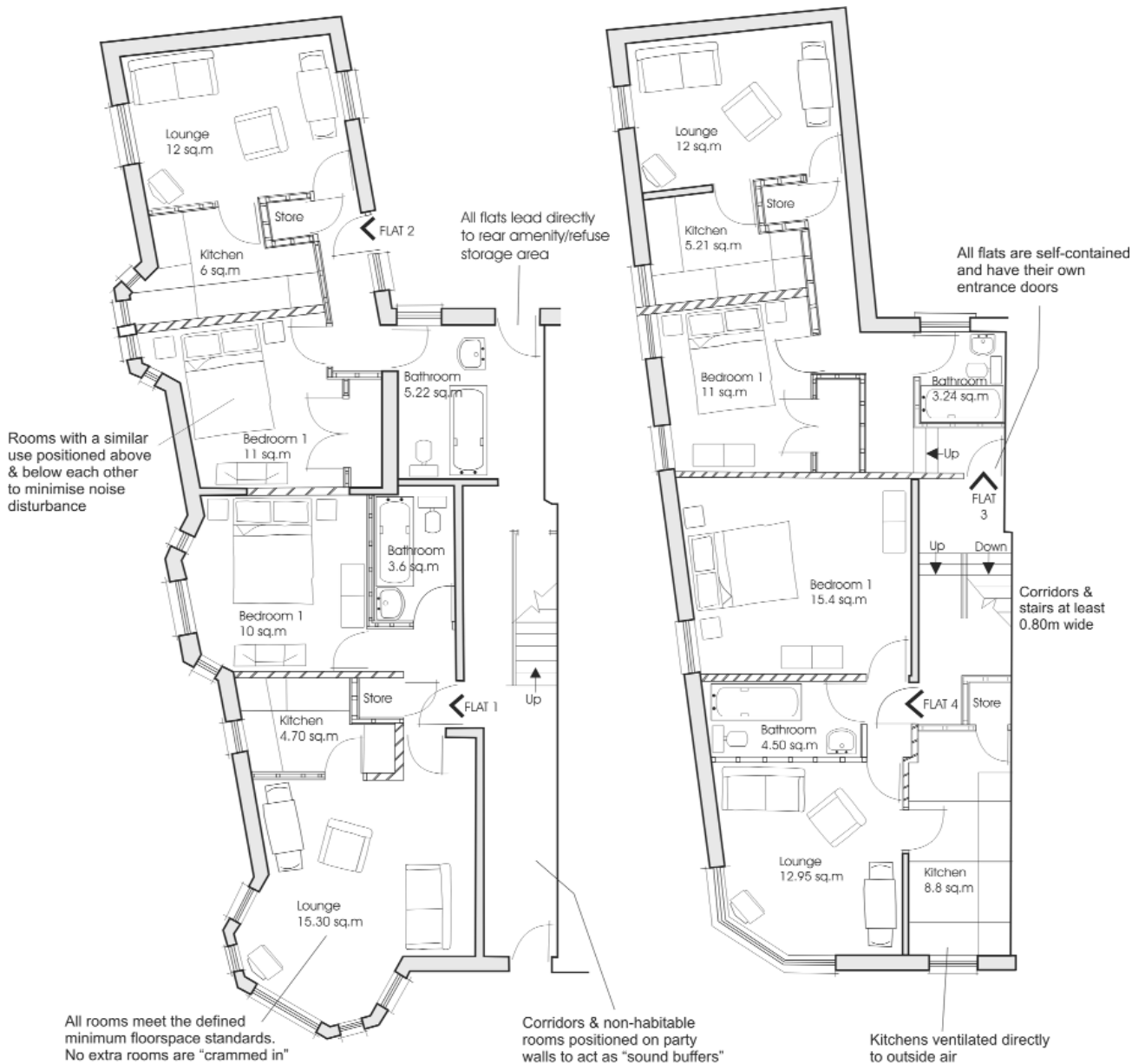
Section



Halls, corridors, storage space etc. can be used to 'absorb' sound and act as a buffer between adjoining flats

Plan

SPG10: Change of use of holiday accommodation & conversion of properties to permanent residential use & holiday flats



Example of an acceptable layout based on a recent housing association conversion in Blackpool

Amenity Space

It is recognised that many properties within the main holiday areas do not have gardens, parking or amenity space to meet the normal needs of permanent residents. Reflecting the already high density of development with no open space, any sub-divisions to be permitted should not further accentuate this situation. Properties being converted will therefore need to comply with the following amenity standards: -

Generally throughout the Borough	Existing front walls and front garden areas are to be retained.
Inner Areas	No further loss of outdoor space used or capable of being used to serve the needs of residents will be permitted
Elsewhere	Proposals must have a defined amenity or garden area capable of being used to serve the needs of residents. Loss of rear garden areas to provide for parking will only be permitted up to a maximum of half the rear garden area and must not be out of character or interfere with the enjoyment of surrounding dwellings.

Parking

The subdivision of a property into a number of individual self-contained dwelling units means that additional parking may need to be provided within the site. The level of parking provision required for conversions to self-contained accommodation should be considered having regard to the Council's normal parking standards as specified below: -

Family Housing	2 car space per dwelling unit (N.B. - flats with 2 or more bedrooms constitute family housing).
Single-Bedroom Housing	1 car space per dwelling.
Sheltered Housing	1 car space per 3 dwellings.

Reflecting the existing high density of development and lack of space to provide off-street parking, the Council may permit lower levels of off-street parking within the defined inner areas of the Borough (see attached plan at the rear of this Guidance) where: -

a). Some or all of the parking provision for residents and visitors could be accommodated by existing public on-street or off-street car parking facilities without conflicting with existing users or individual or cumulative detriment to highway/pedestrian safety and/or local environmental conditions;

and/or

b). The car ownership rates of future occupiers is unlikely to generate a demand for parking space in line with the relevant standard taking into account: -

- The type and size of residential units being created.
- Proximity to the Town Centre.
- Proximity to local shopping and service facilities.
- Proximity to public transport.

On-site parking provision which necessitates the hard surfacing of existing private amenity space to the individual or cumulative detriment of residential amenity and/or local environmental conditions will not be acceptable.



Planning and Transportation Division
P O Box 17, Corporation Street
Blackpool, FY1 1LZ

planning.transportation@blackpool.gov.uk

All telephone enquiries:
Customer First Centre 01253 477477

The Council believes in access for all.

To ensure services provided by Blackpool Council are accessible, information is available upon request in a variety of accessible formats, including large print, Braille, on audio-cassette or computer disc.

We can also provide help for British Sign Language users and provide information in languages other than English.

Please ask for details.

Customer First telephone number: 01253 477 477