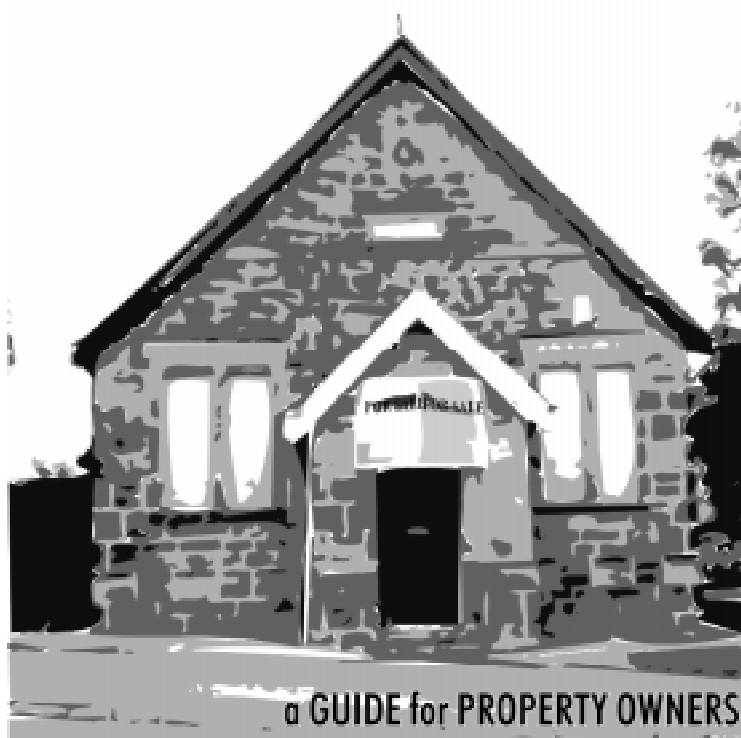


# RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS in HARROGATE TOWN CENTRE



*Harrogate*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Reprinted August 1996

## INTRODUCTION

- 1** The conversion of single dwellings into flats, maisonettes and bedsits makes a valuable contribution to satisfying the demand for new and upgraded accommodation in central Harrogate. This accommodation can be provided for either sale or rent.
- 2** Care must be taken, however, to choose a suitable property to meet the needs of prospective purchasers and tenants and comply with current legislation, housing standards, planning policy and building regulations.
- 3** This leaflet highlights some of the main issues for property owners to consider before converting property into flats, maisonettes and bedsitters.

## IS MY PROPERTY SUITABLE?

- 4** The size of the property and the plot on which it stands often determines the number of units it can provide. Always be realistic about the number of units, 'cramming' may not yield the best financial return.
- 5** Repairs and alterations may be necessary to upgrade the building's present condition.
- 6** The age and location of the property may also influence the extent to which alterations can be made. It is worth checking whether or not the property is situated in a Conservation Area or is a Listed Building due to its special architectural or historic interest. These designations may limit the scope for residential conversions. Enquiries can be made to the Council's Planning Division.

## WHAT STANDARDS MUST BE COMPLIED WITH?

7

It will be necessary to abide by current housing legislation and the Council's standards for houses in multiple occupation, These have been designed to safeguard the health, welfare and safety of occupiers and cover a variety of requirements including:

- i) minimum space standards for rooms dependant on their use.
- ii) numbers of amenities required where non self-contained units (e.g. bedsits) are to be created.
- iii) the type of kitchen facilities which should be provided.
- iv) adequate means of escape from fire and associated fire prevention measures.

Copies of these standards are available from the Department of Health and Housing.

## IS THERE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?

8

House Renovation Grant assistance may be available to help you convert your property, subject to a test of your resources. A Department of the Environment booklet entitled 'House Renovation Grants' provides general information on this matter. Further advice on the Council's current policy and more specific guidance may be obtained from the Department of Health and Housing.

## DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

9

If you change the use of a property via its subdivision into smaller housing units the law says you must first have *planning permission*. Application forms are available from the Planning Division of the Department of Technical Services. The application will be assessed on its individual merits, including its impact on surrounding properties and traffic and parking conditions in the area. Your eligibility for House Renovation Grants depends on your having a valid planning permission.

**10** A separate *building regulations application* will be required if the conversion involves internal structural alterations.

**11** If your property is already sub-divided and being used without planning permission, you may submit a retrospective application. The Borough Council is keen to regularise the position on established residential conversions used without planning permission. However, if there is a record of complaints relating to the existing use this may prejudice your chances of obtaining retrospective planning permission.

## **HOW CAN I MINIMISE NOISE TRANSMISSION?**

**12** Yes. When planning the conversion, the 'stacking' of different rooms should be looked at carefully so that rooms with the same use are, wherever possible, above each other e.g. kitchens above kitchens, bathrooms above bathrooms etc.

## **WILL I NEED SOUND INSULATION WORKS?**

**13** It may be necessary in certain cases for the conversion to include sound insulation measures either horizontally or vertically between units. Your planning permission may have a condition applied to it requiring you to do so.

## **DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE PARKING SPACES?**

**15** To avoid traffic congestion on public highways and to protect the safety of road users and pedestrians. North Yorkshire County Council defined a parking standard of one parking space per bedroom for developers intending to convert property into smaller units. This still applies except in central Harrogate (see map) where recent research has revealed a lower level of car ownership than in other areas. In central Harrogate *only* the standard has been reduced so that

developers are required to provide the following number of spaces per unit.

- \* for bedsits - 0.2 vehicle parking spaces per unit e.g. a residential conversion providing 5 bedsit units would only require 1 off-street parking place with any fractional requirement (e.g. 1.2 or 2.4 spaces) for a particular proposal to be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- \* for flats and maisonettes - 1 vehicle parking space per unit

This parking has to be provided off the street either on the plot or other land nearby which is in your control. Access to the parking spaces must not be in a dangerous location for other road users. Nor should formation of the parking places adversely affect the character of the area. Each parking space should be 4.8m by 2.4m (16ft by 8ft) and have independent access.

**16**

These standards may be relaxed even further in central Harrogate if the property is on a road where existing levels of on-street parking are low, and further on-street parking would not be harmful to the safety and free flow of traffic.

## **WHAT ELSE WILL I NEED TO CONSIDER?**

**17**

Yes. You will need to plan where the refuse storage area will be. This area will need to be screened and of sufficient size to accommodate a suitable number of bins for each of the units created and be accessible to both the residents and refuse collection operatives.

## **WHAT ABOUT SECURITY?**

**18**

The Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station will be able to advise you on how to make the property less of a target for intruders.

## HOW DO I STAND LEGALLY WITH TENANTS?

**19**

Cooperation on both sides is necessary for the relationship between landlord and tenants to work. It is important to draw up a contract which covers arrangements for making minor repairs to the property; giving notice before vacating the property; payment of rent and bills etc. A rent book should be provided for each tenant which will enable finances to be kept in order. You may also wish to obtain references for your tenants before they move in. Your solicitor will help in any necessary legal work.

Contacts:

Planning Enquiries,  
Building Regulations enquiries or  
Environmental Health enquiries      **Tel. (01423) 500600**