

Loft Conversion Guide

The headings listed below should be viewed as guidelines only and are intended to give you some insight into the varying considerations that have to be made at the design stage. All buildings are unique and therefore will have differing issues surrounding the design.

Guide to Loft Conversions;

Loft conversions have always been a popular way to create space within the existing envelope of any building.

The trend is even more popular now with the ever increasing costs involved with moving home. Therefore people are actively looking into ways of increasing their property's value by converting their loft space which is proving to be a cost effective way of developing your home without using additional space on your plot of land, therefore, allow g2 Design to develop concept ideas and initial thoughts to develop the ideal space in the loft.

A loft conversion can add a considerable amount of floor space to your home, but do bear in mind that some of the walls and ceilings will usually be sloping to fit beneath the existing roof, so you may not have full head height across the whole room.

Most commonly, the solution for gaining more head height is to introduce dormer windows. Larger roof heights may not require dormers, but instead skylights/rooflights may be inserted flush to the roof line.



Example of a property where the client has built within the roof space & also note the use of the dormers within the roof space and also on a garage extension.

Design Considerations for Loft Conversions;

Structure

The loading placed on any new loft conversion build will prompt questions of the suitability of the existing load bearing walls and foundations of the property. Also the suitability of any existing lintels and the roof should be examined. Whether the roof is traditional, trussed rafter, trusses or other is likely to have a direct bearing on the practicality and the design. Structural calculations may well be required.

Fire (means of escape)

There are many design considerations regarding escape, therefore, those listed below should be viewed as an indication to the design solution only.

The new upper storey must be served by a fire protected stairway enclosure with a minimum 30 minute fire resisting construction and should either;

- Extend to a final exit,
- Exit through a window within the loft space of size 0.33m², 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 a part of the escape route protection should be a fire resisting door. All other doors on the protected escape route will need to be replaced with FD20 fire resistant doors too. Door frames may require to be changed also. All to achieve the appropriate fire standard and Building Regulations.

Glazing:

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

Smoke Alarms / Heat Detectors / Sprinkler Systems:

Dependant on the design considerations within the loft area, careful consideration should be made as to the solution for detecting fire.

Staircase:

In order for the loft conversion to be considered a habitable room, it must be accessed by a staircase. Loft ladders do NOT comply with Part K of the Building Regulations. Careful design should be made in positioning the staircase in order to generate maximum floor area within the allotted space available.

Services:

If you are planning to put a bathroom or toilet into a loft conversion, its position should be considered very carefully and where possible be close to the existing pipe work. Positioning far away may have effect on the fall of pipe work, accessibility etc. Electrical wiring, water tanks, lighting etc may need to be moved and repositioned.