

Loft conversions



Everything you need to know:

It's common these days to want to convert an empty loft within your home as it can be a cost effective way to achieve the added floor area of modern living requirements of today. It is important to be mindful that it isn't always as straight forward as it may seem and this is where your Local Authority Building control Team can help! Below are some helpful tips and things to be aware of!

What should you consider?

Do I need Planning Permission?

Not always, in most cases loft conversions can fall under Permitted Development We would advise to consult the Planning Team prior to any works commencement.

Do I need Building Regulations Approval?

Yes. When converting a loft you will require Building Regulations Approval. A Building Control surveyor will inspect the conversion throughout the project. If the Loft Conversion is proposed to a two storey single family house the conversion must have a maximum of two habitable rooms and floor area not more than 50m².

With a Loft Conversion, Parts A, B, F, H, K, L and P of the Building Regulations are likely to apply:

Part A requires the existing structure to be adequate to support the new loadings added to the dwelling i.e are the existing ceiling joists suitable as floor joists.

Part B requires compliance with all fire safety aspects of the project. If the floor level of the Loft Conversion is over 4.5m from ground level escape windows would not be suitable. A protected route with habitable rooms with fire doors leading to an external door would be required. A fire alarm system would be needed in circulation spaces on each storey and the fire resistance of the floor may need to be upgraded.

Part F concerns with ensuring that the Loft Conversion will be properly ventilated to ensure that there is no build up of excess condensation. It could mean extract -

fans in bathrooms, trickle ventilation in windows and appropriate membranes and air flow.

Part H requires any drainage to new bathrooms installed is appropriately discharged.

Part K relates to putting measures in place to avoid injuries from falling, collisions and impact. For example stairs will be required to be installed with a 2m headroom and to not be too steep.

Part L of the Building Regulations requires thermal efficiency requirements to be met to avoid excess energy loss.

Part P requires that electrical works carried out in certain areas are notifiable work. Installations should be carried out by someone from competent person scheme who will issue a Part P compliance certificate.

What do you need to do next?

- Consult with a structural engineer to get confirmation that the existing structure is suitable to take the new loadings.
- If your home is semi-detached or terrace then you will need to notify your neighbours of your planned work if it falls under the requirements of the Party Wall Act.
- Make your Building regulations application here : www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/building-control/make-a-building-regulations-application
- Appoint a reputable builder, do your research and ask for references or to see previous completed works.

On successful completion you will receive a certificate of compliance to keep safe should you ever sell your property.

Still have a query? Did you know that we do offer 1 hours free pre application consultation for those who need it. Contact us today at buildingcontrol@eastsuffolk.gov.uk / 01502 523072