

West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 (adopted June 2025)

Policy DM22

Residential Use of Space above Non-residential Units

The Council will support proposals related to the conversion of existing space or provision of additional space above non-residential units that provide a net increase in housing and:

- a. Are consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene;
- b. Are well designed and meet the appropriate space standards; and
- c. Maintain safe access and egress for occupier.

Where the proposal relates to the addition of residential space or the conversion of existing non-residential space to residential space under permitted development rights, the development should:

- i. Be well designed and meet the appropriate space standards; and
- ii. Meet the conditions and limitations of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), including the need to apply for Prior Approval.

Supporting Text

11.36 The Council is committed to providing a full range of housing types, to meet the diverse need of the District. Town and district centres in particular offer an opportunity for new housing, taking advantage of access to employment, shops and services and, in many cases, increased public transport provision. This could take many forms. The most common is likely to be the conversion of first floors and above of units which are currently in non-residential use. However this could also take the form of vertical extensions to non-residential units.

11.37 Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) there are permitted development rights for proposals to change the use from commercial, business and service uses (use class E) and some sui generis uses to residential use; and/or to add up to two flats (use class C3) to a current non-residential mixed use, subject to limitations and conditions including the need to apply for Prior Approval.

11.38 The Council's starting point will be for all new homes, including subdivisions and upper floor conversions of retail units, to meet the appropriate space standards, unless it can be shown that the standards are not practicable in the face of other material considerations and policy requirements. For example, an exception may be made where works needed to achieve the standards would adversely affect the significance of a heritage asset or would require unachievable changes to the building being converted.