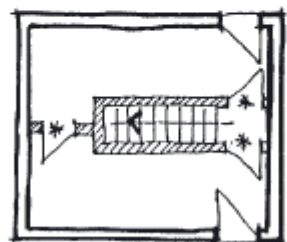
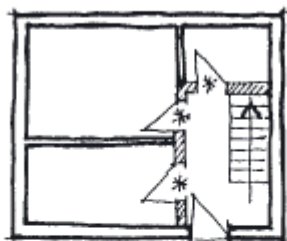


**If your design includes a staircase that leads to an external door.**

For existing two storey houses with an additional room in the roof, the stairs must be protected by fire resisting construction with fire doors, and come down into a hall that leads to an external door, or there must be at least two separate escape routes available to an external door.

*Alternative ground floor exit arrangements*



\* half-hour fire resisting self-closing door  
zzzz half-hour fire resisting construction



More information is available from:

✉ Building Control, South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2HT

🌐 [www.southsomerset.gov.uk/buildingcontrol](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/buildingcontrol)

☎ 01935 462462  
(8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday)  
(8.45am to 4.45pm Friday)

📧 [building\\_control@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:building_control@southsomerset.gov.uk)



Version 4, Dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**If you would like this document translated into other languages or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please contact:**

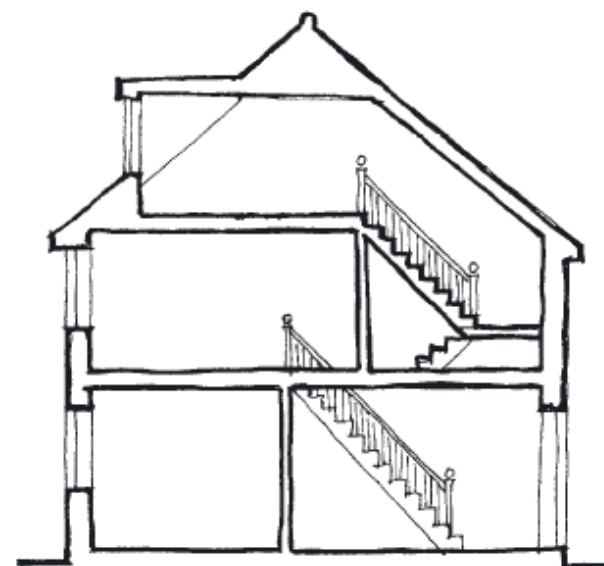
☎ **01935 462462**

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany w językowych polskim.

Este documento encontra-se disponível em Português, a pedido.

## Building Control Services

### Domestic Loft Conversions



## Guidance Leaflet - 6



## Introduction

This guide relates to loft conversions in single family-occupied bungalows and two-storey houses where no more than two habitable rooms are to be formed in the roof space and their total floor area does not exceed 50 square metres.

Professional advice should be obtained from an architect, surveyor or structural engineer, or the proposals discussed with the council's building control staff, prior to submitting an application.

The council's planning staff should also be contacted to ascertain whether or not planning permission is needed.

In all cases the structural stability and access will be the primary concerns, but fire safety and means of escape will be more stringent for loft conversions in two-storey houses than for those in bungalows unless they are of open plan layout.

## The following areas of construction require special attention

### Roof

This may be of traditional construction or of prefabricated trusses. Alterations to either should be designed to be structurally safe. Trusses are especially difficult to alter. New insulation and ventilation should be provided to reduce heat loss and condensation, and any alterations should leave the roof weather-tight.

### Walls

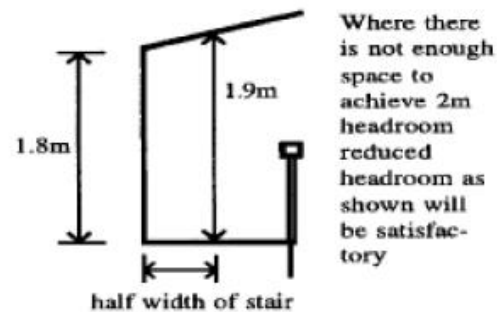
Existing walls to be used to support the new loft structure must be shown to be suitably load-bearing, usually by exposing the foundations.

## Floor

Existing ceiling joists will not usually be adequate for the additional loads of a floor, and new joists will probably need to be provided. These will need support from additional beams and/or suitable load-bearing walls. In some cases the fire resistance of the existing ceiling may require upgrading.

## Stairs

Another key area is the headroom available over the staircase. It should be at least 2 metres although it can be reduced if headroom is limited (see the diagram below). A standard staircase complying with the requirements for a private stair (pitch, rising, going, handrails etc) must be installed wherever space is available, but where it is not, an alternating tread stair or fixed ladder may be acceptable to provide access to a single habitable room. Retractable ladders are not acceptable.



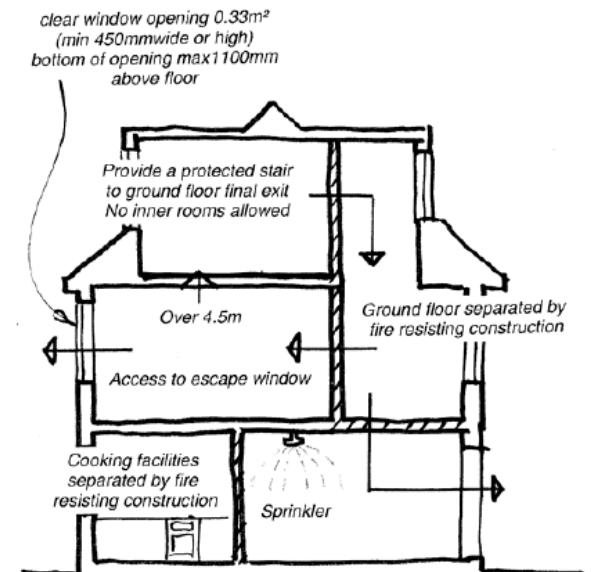
## Means of escape

If you already have an open plan staircase it will need to be enclosed. Alternatively, it may be possible to provide sprinkler protection to the open-plan area, in conjunction with a fire resisting partition and door (FD/E20), separating the ground floor from the upper storeys. This

door should also be arranged to allow occupants of the loft room to access an escape window at first floor level in the event of a fire in the open plan area.

Any cooking facilities should be separated from the open-plan area with fire-resisting construction. Mains wired interlinked smoke alarms to BS5839-6:2004 will have to be provided at every storey.

The diagram below illustrates what is required, note that in most cases existing doors will need to be upgraded or changed to fire resisting doors.



Conversion where open plan arrangements exist