

Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust

Garage conversion policy

1. Hampstead Garden Suburb was designed before car ownership became widespread. However a substantial number of properties, particularly those constructed after the First World War, were built with garages, either as an integral part of the property or detached from it. In some cases space for garages was planned for the garage to be built later.
2. The Trust is generally keen to see garages used for the purpose for which they were designed, thereby keeping cars out of view and reducing parking congestion on Suburb roads. The Trust recognises that many small garages are not suitable for larger modern cars, although the increasing popularity of small electric cars will make such garages more usable. Nevertheless, some residents will want to increase their living space by converting their garage to habitable space and this Guidance Note offers advice on how this might be achieved.
3. In Leasehold properties, the lease usually contains a clause which prohibits the use of a garage for anything other than housing a car. For Freehold properties, there are often covenants in freehold transfers which state that the garage should be used only as a garage for a private motor car. In either case, the consent of the Trust is needed for conversion and it may be necessary to vary a clause in the lease or freehold transfer.
4. In reaching a decision the Trust will consider
 - a) the practical aspects of maintaining the external appearance and character of the property.
 - b) the availability of a reasonable amount of on-street or off-street parking commensurate with the size of the property and in line with Trust guidance on hard standings.
 - c) the need for a reasonable amount of storage available within the house should the garage no longer be usable for storage. The Trust will not approve the erection of a large garden shed to compensate for the loss of storage in the garage.
 - d) the requirement for adequate sound insulation between properties.
 - e) Established breaches of the restrictive covenants on garage use

In some cases garages have been converted without consent. The Trust will pursue a policy of addressing breaches of the covenants on garage use which come to its attention. In doing this it will consider the particular circumstances of the case including whether the Trust has previously been aware of the breach.
5. If particular circumstances mean that consent can be granted for a conversion and a restrictive covenant needs to be varied, a premium will be payable. This will be assessed on the basis of a percentage of the value of the equivalent area of habitable space.

6. Consent for a garage conversion may have conditions attached to it. These might include the restoration of authentic garage doors and the installation of obscured glass.
7. Applications are sometimes submitted for the replacement of the garage doors with a window. Consent for this will depend very much on whether the garage is an important architectural element of the house or is part of a symmetrical composition. If consent is given for a window then the Trust will require the removal of the driveway in front of what was the garage and reinstatement with soft landscaping and hedging.