



COMPLIANCE CHALLENGES WITH ATTIC/LOFT CONVERSIONS

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Loft Conversion Guidelines

Protect Your Family - Fire Safety Guidance



Why do an attic conversion?

Pro's

1. Relatively low cost way of getting extra space in your house.
2. Can add value to your house
3. Doesn't use up your back garden space

Con's

1. May need to carry out works to party wall so should get neighbor's consent.
2. May impact on existing first floor room space
3. May end up with a non-compliant attic space.(Part B?).



The logo for Shaf's Building Services is displayed on a grey rectangular background. The word "Shaf's" is written in a large, white, elegant cursive font. Below it, the words "BUILDING SERVICES" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is centered within the grey box.

Shaf's BUILDING SERVICES

Short you tube animation of works being carried out

Pretty good for information but

- What about ventilation Part F
- Non compliant window heights part B, Flooring not continued out to non habitable space.
- Stairs part K compliance?
- No fire door into the attic conversion - no mention of fire safety
- Is the structure signed off by the engineer
- What about timber frame or light steel gauge? What support the steel beam in those cases?



Loft Conversion Guidelines

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What parts of the Building Regulations?

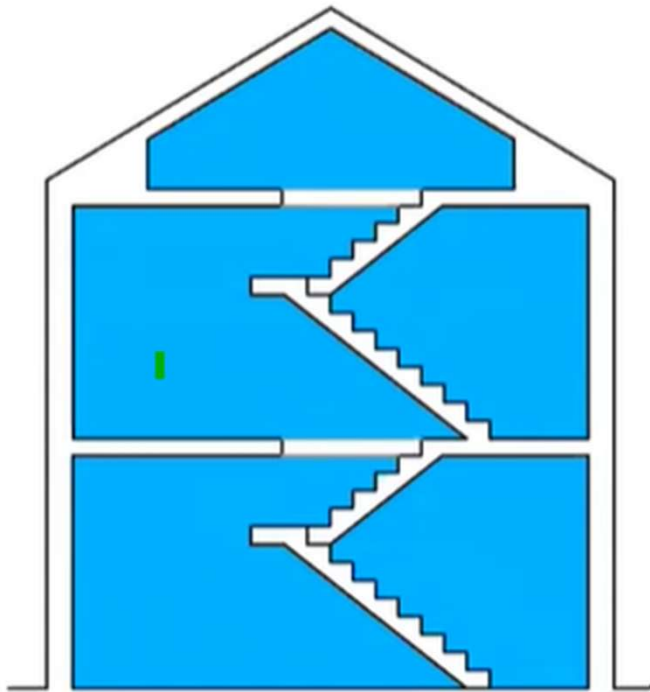
Parts A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, K, L – Could be all parts except J
and M

What does the guidance say ?

Loft conversion guidelines – Department of Housing, Local
Government and Heritage 2022

Focus mainly on Part B





Focus on 2 to 3 storey conversion

Most common

Can be addressed through Paragraph 1.3.3 of TGD B

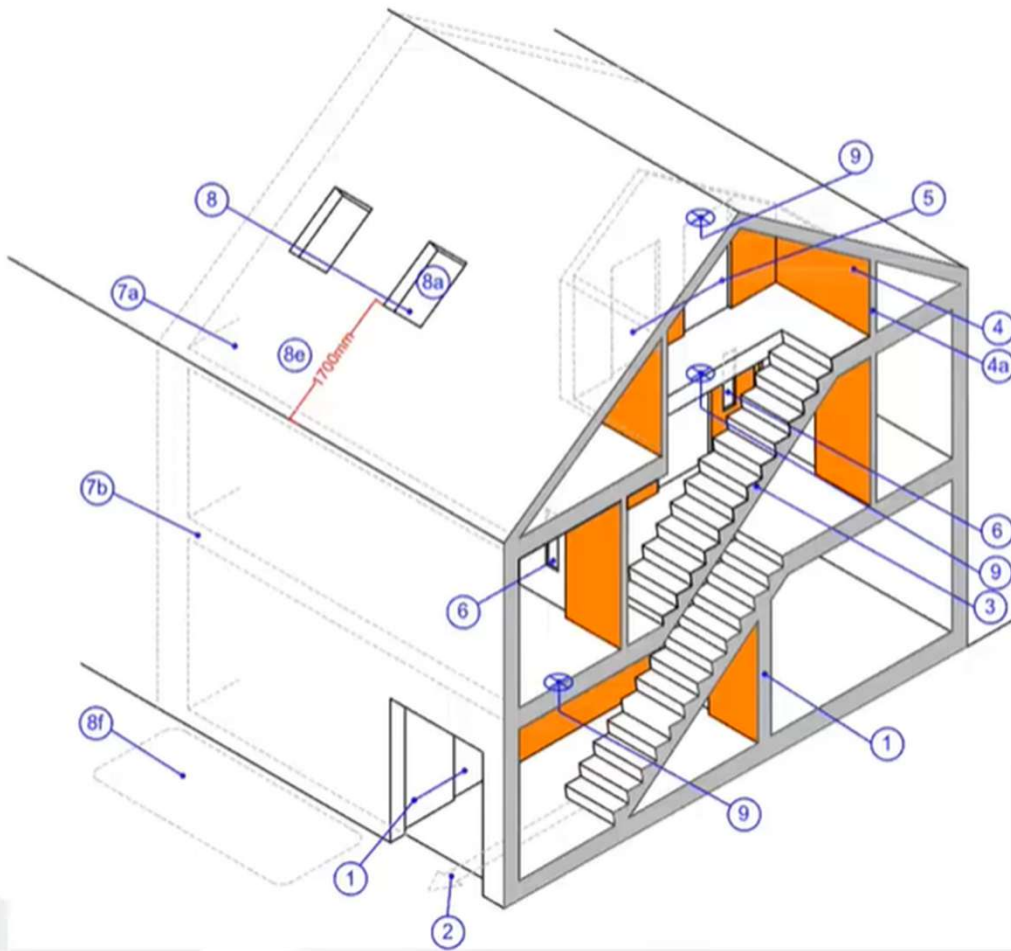
Or

Loft conversion Guidelines

Note: guidelines applicable for

- a) 50 sq. m or less
- b) No more than 2 habitable room

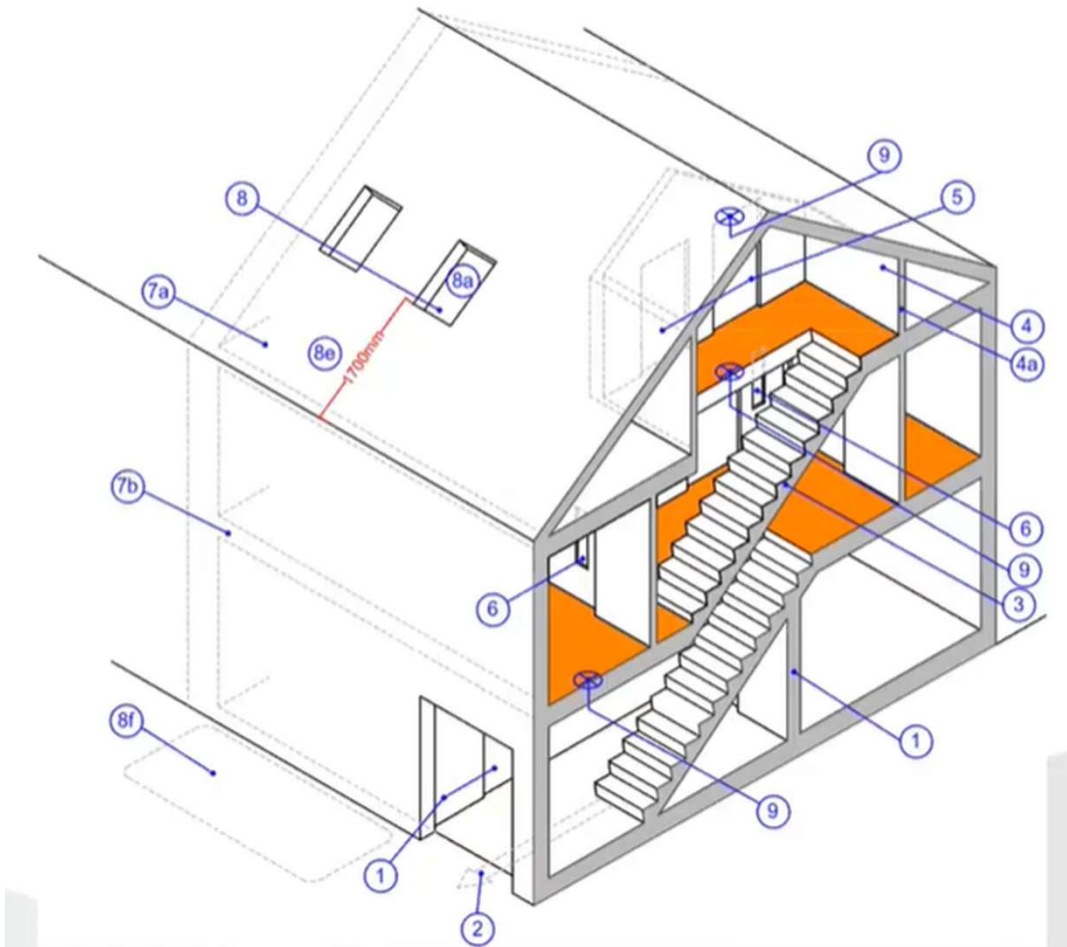




Walls

- Enclosed 30 minutes fire resistant stairway
- FD 20 Fire doors to all rooms
- Can use existing stud partitions if everything fire stopped
- Stairs can rise over existing stairs or through a room.
- If through a room fire door at top or bottom of stairs
- If at top protected stairs whole way.
- If at bottom of stairs in a room no need to protect this part of the stairs as room is protected



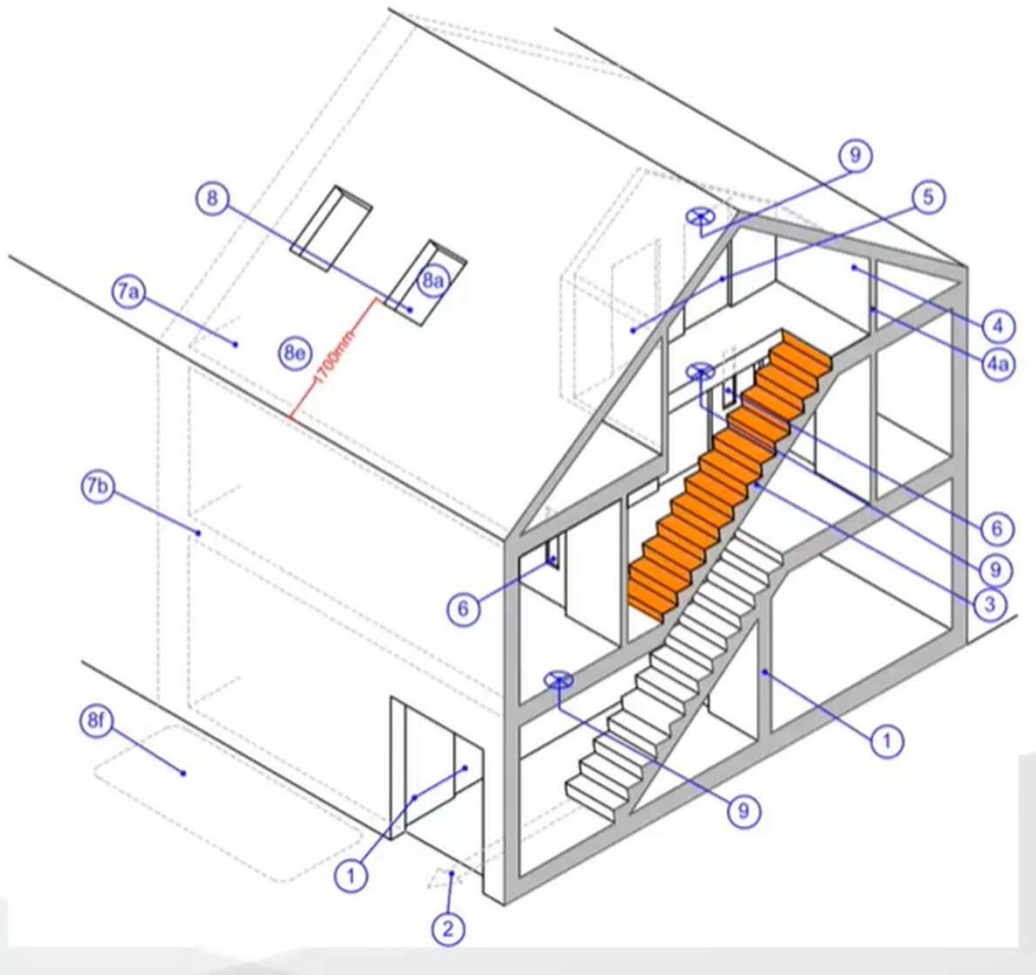


Floors

12.5mm plasterboard on 37mm joists with
18mm deckboard - Modified Half hour

Surface decking must extend out to the outer
walls (include voids)





Stairs

Can have a spiral stairs or alternate thread if only 1 habitable room infrequently used

Otherwise comply with Part K

Should rise through a protected stairway

Headroom for new stairs can be 1.9m



Doors and Windows and Alarms

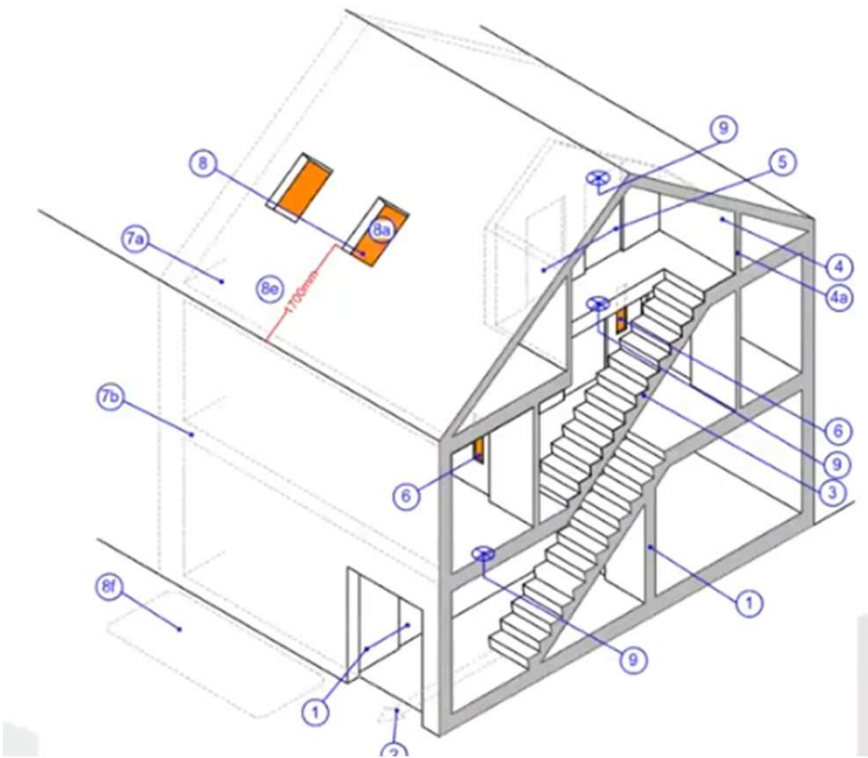
All doors to the protected corridor to be FD 20S

Windows to the protected enclosure to be fire resisting and fixed shut

Escape window to be no more than 0.8m to 1.1m above floor and not more than 1.7m to the eave.

Ground beneath that window to be suitable for a ladder access

Smoke alarm to be upgraded to LD2 throughout house





PLANNING PERMISSION

- Sometimes not required if no windows at the front
- Very popular – 53 planning permissions in Fingal from January 1st to Wednesday 24th of March - circa 18 a month.
- Usually attic to storage area??

FW26A/0116E	The development will consist of constructing a utility room extension at the re
F26A/0210E	Planning Permission is sought for: Conversion of existing attic to storage are
FW26A/0114E	Attic conversion for storage with two rear dormers, four front rooflights and
F26A/0213E	Planning Permission is sought for: Conversion of existing attic to storage area
FW26A/0113	Permission for a first floor extension to the rear of the existing
F26A/0205E	Planning permission for attic conversion with roof windows to front and rear ro
FW26A/0112E	The development will consist of an attic conversion including a rear dormer roo
F26A/0200	The development will consist of a dormer to the North side



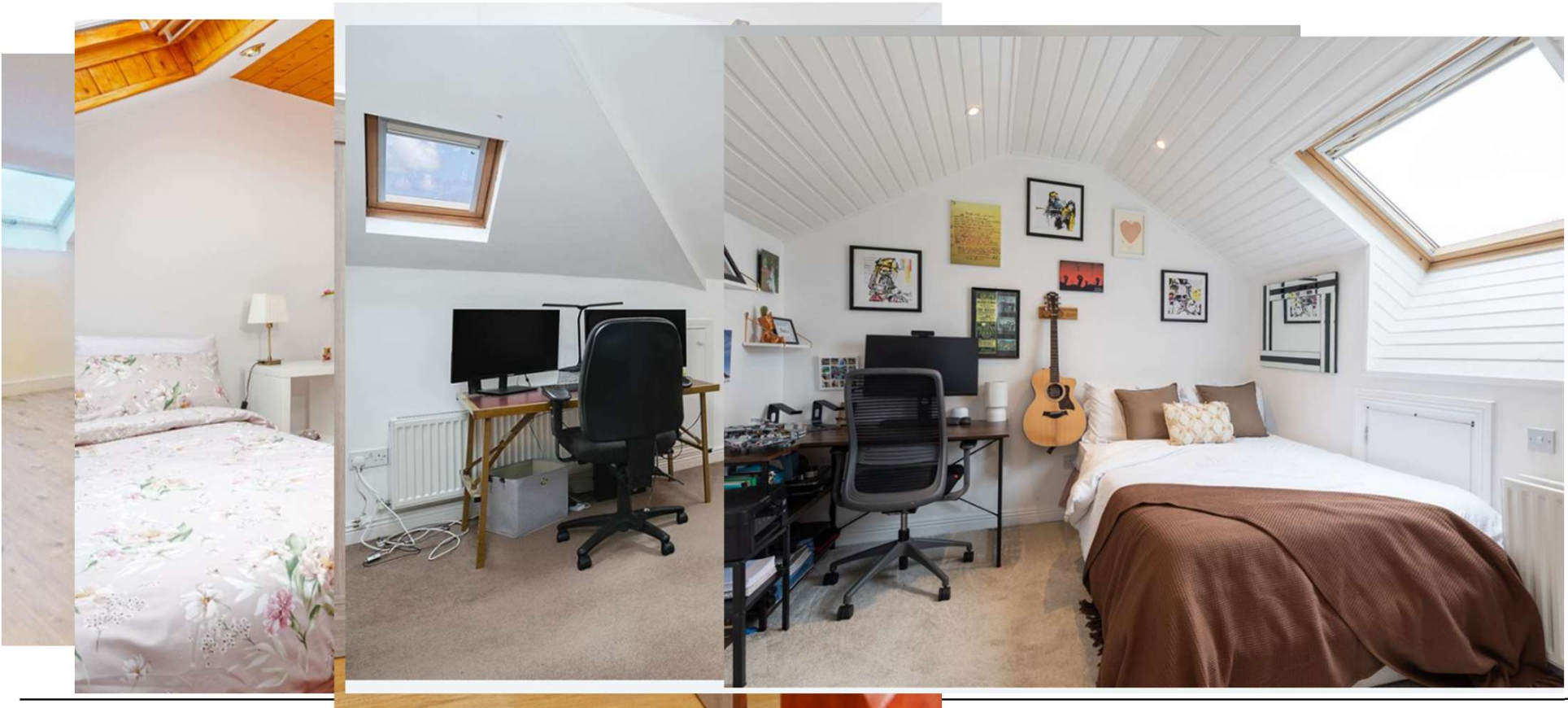


BCMS

- Similar number coming through on BCMS
- Most come through as opt out though even though short form option
- Lot of mention of structural details etc – but 80 to 90% of them do not mention Part B or fire safety



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INSPECTIONS

- Generally an inspection after neighbour complaint
- Usually bedroom in the attic space.
- Fire stopping issues not uncommon
- No fire doors, escape windows non compliant, no protected corridor etc.
- Maybe not all attic are non compliant but 100% record in the ones inspected.



PHOTOS





AFTER INSPECTION

- Remediation fire stopping works to be carried out if necessary.
- Converted attic space to be made compliant with Regs for non habitable space
- Letter to or from Householder stating that the attic is to be used as non –habitable space
- What about timber frame – light steel gauge – can the frame take the extra loading?
- Enforcement section 8



WHATS REALLY HAPPENING

Website online

✓ So what is the official status of my attic conversion?

With very few exceptions, attic conversions are carried out as “non habitable storage rooms”. In reality, however, they are used as bedrooms, offices, studies, games or computer rooms, and emergency guest bedrooms.

✓ Does that mean I can't sell my three bedroom house as a four bedroom?

That's correct. If you offer your house for sale you simply state that the attic has been converted. Prospective purchasers will recognise the value of the extra space and it won't matter to them that you can't officially call it a bedroom. However, please note that if you have made structural alterations you can't sell your house without an architect's “certificate of compliance”. This certifies that the work has been carried out in accordance with the new building regulations.



WHATS REALLY HAPPENING

✓ So, what if my roof is high enough to be classified as “Habitable Accommodation”?

Well, you have two choices. The more economical option is to proceed as above for non habitable storage room. Or, you can engage an architect, have plans drawn up, submit them to your local authority for planning approval, and then have the job done. It’s a little more costly, and takes much longer.

✓ What about fire regulations?

3 storey houses have far stricter fire regulations than 2 storey. However, the vast majority of these attic conversion rooms are non-habitable, which means that strictly speaking, your house is not a 3 storey building subject to the stricter fire regulations.

This is how most architects view the situation.

You can, of course, voluntarily opt to comply with these regulations, but they do add considerable cost to the job.



WHATS REALLY HAPPENING

✓ Do I need my neighbours' permission to convert my attic?

No. A standard conversion will not affect your neighbour in any way, apart from the noise during construction. You might advise them about this in the interest of good relations. However, if you are having dormers built it is sometimes necessary to put a couple of scaffolding legs on a neighbouring property, and you will need to ask their permission for that.

✓ Can I convert my Timber Framed House?

Most timber framed houses can have the attic converted successfully. However, it is essential that the roof be inspected first by a qualified structural engineer who will specify the support structure to be used, and who will issue the certificate of compliance afterwards. It adds a little to the cost, but it can save you from destroying your house, endless heartache and years of legal problems.

We have successfully converted many timber framed attics and will continue to do so using qualified structural engineers to ensure you get the very best and safe job you deserve.

