Alterations application guidance notes

Internal work

The council will generally agree to most proposed alterations to the inside of the property subject to several important factors.

Changing the layout (reconfiguration)  
  
The council will only consider this type of proposal if there is no impact on other flats in the building:

* It should not cause additional noise or disturbance on account of changes in the habitation or the use of the premises
* It cannot reduce the possibility of escape from the flat in the event of a fire nor should it increase the likelihood of the onset or spread of fire and smoke.
* A bedroom must not be situated above or below a living room or kitchen of another flat
* Subdividing the property into more than one dwelling unit will generally not be allowed
* The proposed size of a bedroom must not fall below the minimum reasonable and acceptable standard (minimum single bedroom size is 7.5m2 and double 11.5m2) and any alterations must not make the property overcrowded.

Structural alterations   
  
Structural alterations must not be such that they could affect the stability of the building and;

* The creation of a new window or doorway in the outside wall will not be allowed, except for windows or doors in approved extensions
* Building a new fireplace or the opening up of one that has been sealed will not normally be permitted in view of the burden of the additional maintenance for the landlord in relation to the flue and chimney in the building.

If an alteration is agreed which significantly affects the exterior or the structure of the building, this would be on the condition that the current and future leaseholders accept all liability for the cost of any maintenance work relating to this.

Loft alterations   
  
Unless it is clearly included as part of their property under the terms of their lease, leaseholders have no right to make any alterations to this area. If the loft is included within the part of the demised area of the property, permission will still be required.

Boilers and flues   
  
Any work in relation to installing a new flue or changing an old one must be agreed beforehand by the council. Any damage caused to the outside of the building will be repaired by the council at full cost to the resident concerned.

*Landlord consent will not be given for a leaseholder to be disconnected from the communal heating system*.

Flooring alterations   
  
The council will not agree requests to fit laminate flooring and requires that a property must be covered with carpet and underlay other than kitchen and bathrooms.

# External work

*When considering requests for external works the council has set the following principles:*

* Consent will always be withheld if the council considers that an alteration may   contravene health and safety or make the property structurally dangerous or unstable (i.e. such as removing a supporting wall or weakening foundations).
* The proposed work must not cause or be likely to cause any maintenance or structural problems. It must not encroach onto or affect any land which is not part of the flat or contravene local byelaws, tenancy conditions or conservation areas.
* Permission will not be granted where there is the possibility that other residents may be caused nuisance or inconvenience. Where other residents are required to be consulted, the council may withhold consent if there are objections.
* The council has the right to withhold consent if it is considered that the proposals are not aesthetically in keeping with the building or surrounding area.
* The applicant must have the consent of the landlord before starting any works and planning or building control agreement alone is not sufficient.

When requesting structural alterations, you may be expected to pay for and provide the council with a full structural survey to validate your application.

## Exterior minor work

* **Exterior brickwork:** Any changes to the exterior, such as painting of the brickwork requires landlord permission but will not normally be allowed
* **Exterior fixtures and fittings**: The attachment of anything outside the property requires permission from the council. Examples are security cameras, burglar alarm boxes, external signage and exterior lighting.

## Conservatories, Extensions, Conversions, Additional Rooms/Space

A conservatory or extension will not normally be permitted where the flat is situated in a block of flats and will have a negative impact on the design consistency of the buildings and the maintenance obligations of the landlord. Permission for these applications can usually only be considered where the garden belongs to a maisonette, a house or flat (not on a block or estate) and where it’s for the sole use of the residents who live in it.

Conversions of knock-through properties converted back into two units, please note that additional fees will be applicable.

Valuation of the property as one unit, then the two units will be valued, and a marriage value will be applied resulting in the leaseholder paying a premium to the landlord for the conversion into two units.  Please note that new floor plans and legal fees will be applicable.  Another lease may have to be created for the new unit.

Valuation of the area, room to determine the marriage value that will be applied resulting in the leaseholder paying a premium to the landlord for the creation of an additional space or room.  Please note that new floor plans and legal fees will be applicable.

## Window replacement

Windows are deemed to be part of the building’s structure and so are the responsibility of the council to maintain or replace, lies with the council and there is no obligation to accept any request for a window renewal. The council retains a full maintenance obligation for the upkeep of windows.

Generally speaking, requests to replace windows by leaseholders will be refused as they form part of the building’s structure and therefore are not within the lessee’s demise.

In exceptional circumstances where consent is provided, the leaseholder will still have to contribute their share of any future window repairs or replacement.

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## Communal areas and preventing light or air reaching other residents

Any proposals that might affect access to or the use of a communal area including corridors, stairs, entrances, basement areas, gardens and lofts will not be permitted. The council also will not generally allow any development that will significantly reduce the light and air for other residents. 

## Digital TV aerials and satellite dishes

Consent for satellite dishes will not normally be granted and can only be considered if there is no TV communal reception system for the building. 

## Security grilles and fire safety doors

Grilles over windows and security doors constitute a possible hazard in the event of fire and so can only be permitted where it is evidenced that they conform to the most recent London Fire Brigade advice. Consent for a replacement fire door will only be given if it is proposed to replace this with a door of standard specification, for example FD30 or FD60, which offers 30 and 60 minutes fire protection respectively.

Security gates across communal walkways are not permitted. 

## Retrospective permission

Where alterations have been undertaken without the landlord’s written consent you will have to submit a retrospective application. The application fee is £390, in certain circumstances, such as conversions, the fee may be up to £2,000.

The council will make every effort to ensure that consent is not unreasonably withheld but are highly unlikely to agree retrospective permission for large scale works such as extensions or conservatories. Where retrospective consent cannot be granted, you will be required to reinstate the property to its former condition.

Where leaseholders have built into an area or space that is not demised to them, they would usually be required to reinstate the property. However, should the council decide to consider their retrospective application, the area or space will be valued, and the leaseholder would be required to pay a substantial amount for it.