

Licence for Alterations

Structural alterations and purchasing additional land

London Borough of Camden - Leaseholder Services

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STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS AND PURCHASING ADDITIONAL LAND

This guide covers the Council's requirements and process should you request landlord's consent for external structural alterations to your leasehold flat.

STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

Your lease states that if you make any alterations or additions to the internal layout of your property, you must ask for our permission first by requesting a licence for alterations.

The Council will also consider applications for works that alter the structure of the building such as:

- rear and side extensions on garden land already owned by you
- changing a window into a door.

In these cases, as well as a **licence for alterations,** the Council will issue a **deed of variation** to your lease. The deed will make you responsible for 100% of the future maintenance costs relating to your alterations.

If the proposed work extends beyond your demise you will need to make an application to purchase the area concerned. Examples would normally include:

- loft conversions,
- enclosing balconies
- creating roof terraces
- building extensions or conservatories on garden land not included within your lease.

If agreed, as well as the deed of variation and licence for alterations for structural alterations, the area of land concerned will be sold to you on a **supplemental lease**.

TYPES OF WORK OR USAGE LIKELY TO BE DENIED

Under the permitted use clause of your lease, you must keep your property as a self-contained residential flat. There are important management reasons for including this clause within your lease. The following requests are therefore likely to be denied:

- subdivision of a flat into separate units.
- combining two separate flats into one larger unit.
- using your flat for short term holiday lets (i.e. AirBnB and similar).
- any scheme which alters the room stacking arrangement of the building causing a potential noise nuisance.

The following developments are also likely to be denied:

- developments which include basement excavations.

- loft conversions where the loft contains working Council services such as water tanks or pipework.
- developments on communal estate land.
- developments on communal shared gardens.

In the context of the above, we strongly advise leaseholders not to incur costs for architectural plans and professional fees if it is likely the development could be denied.

THE LANDLORD'S CONSENT PROCESS

The decision as to whether landlord's consent can be granted lies with the Neighbourhood Services Manager. Architectural standard plans of the proposed alterations must be sent to Leaseholder Services. We will register your request and forward it to the Neighbourhood Services Manager for consideration. The Neighbourhood Services Manager will seek technical input, consult with residents and attempt to respond to you and tell you whether the application can be progressed, within 12 weeks. However, it may take longer depending on the information you provide and the resources available.

Please note the Neighbourhood Services Manager's letter/email does not constitute landlord's consent to the proposed works, which will only be provided on completion of the formal licence.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager may ask you to provide a structural engineer's report covering your proposals.

If the Neighbourhood Services Manager agrees that your case can progress, it will be subject to you obtaining all necessary statutory consents. You will need to have full architectural standard plans drawn up.

If additional land needs to be purchased e.g. the loft space, then it is at this stage that a valuation is carried out by the Council's valuer. Applications to purchase additional land are valued on the basis of the Council claiming **35% of gross development value** i.e. construction costs will not be taken into account. For example, if the council's valuer calculates that the value of your property would increase by £200,000 as a result of the loft conversion, then the council would require a premium of £70,000 (35% of £200,000).

You will have **two months** to accept the valuation premium offered from the date you are notified of it. Once you have accepted the valuation, we will instruct our solicitors to produce the deed of variation/licence for alterations and supplemental lease. It is difficult to provide an accurate timescale due to the many considerations that can be involved with structural alterations.

You will need to appoint a solicitor to act on your behalf and register the deed at the land registry. If you have a mortgage, your mortgage company must be a party to the deed of variation.

Please note that we also reserve the right to amend the conditions allowing the case to progress, amend the legal documentation or request further information from you at any time until the sealing of the deed.

STATUTORY CONSENTS

You are also legally required to obtain all necessary statutory consents in relation to the alterations you wish to make, such as planning permission and building control consent. Camden will not provide formal landlords permission without first receiving copies of these consents. **Please note, obtaining statutory consents does not constitute landlord permission. Therefore, if statutory consents are obtained before landlord permission is granted, then this is at your own risk (including any professional fees incurred).**

Work to the structure of the building will normally involve **planning permission** and **building control approval** although there may be other consents that you will require (such as listed building consent). You must seek professional advice about which consents are necessary.

Camden's **planning department** can be contacted on
Email: Planning@camden.gov.uk
Website: Planning and building development - Camden Council

The works will also require building control approval. You must submit a **full plans application** to the building control service *(or relevant body). A building notice application **will not** be sufficient for us to be able to give landlord's permission.

Camden's **building control service** can be contacted on
Email: building.control@camden.gov.uk
Website: Contact building control - Camden Council

*Please note that since 1st October 2023, there is a separate building control application process for higher risk buildings (known as 'relevant buildings'). Where building works are planned or have occurred in 'relevant buildings' (ie buildings which are above 18m in height or have at least 7 stories), then the application for building control approval must be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator (Health & Safety Executive) and not the local authority or approved inspector. Further information can be found on gov.uk website via the following link https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-a-building-control-application-for-a-higher-risk-building

ACCESS LICENCE (if applicable)

If the alterations you wish to make requires access onto or over Council land, whether it is the erecting of scaffolding, the right to oversail or permission to use Council land, you will be required to obtain an Access Licence. To support your application, you will be required to provide the following documentation:

- A Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) from the main contractor covering all site activities.
- A scaffold plan.
- A copy of the project programme.
- A copy of the contractor's public liability insurance (minimum cover: £5 million).

Camden grants Access Licences for a maximum period of six months (if you require the Licence for beyond this period, you will need to reapply). Access Licences for alterations to residential properties will not be liable to a licensing fee (all applications will be liable to surveyor and legal costs).

Should you require an Access Licence, please contact the Asset Strategy and Valuation Surveyor, Emmanuel Opara (Emmanuel.Opara@camden.gov.uk).

INSURANCE

If your proposed works are likely to affect the sum insured for the building, an insurance revaluation will be carried out. The new sum insured will take effect after the works have been completed, and the licence will require you to tell us once you have completed the works. If you do not inform us, we will be unable to increase the sum insured and you will be liable for any resulting uninsured loss.

FURTHER APPROVAL FOR LAND BEING PURCHASED

If the accepted valuation is over £30,000 further approval for the sale of land will be needed from the Executive Director Supported Communities and that will add an approximately further two months to the process. The valuation will remain valid as long as the Council's solicitors have been instructed within six months of you being notified of the valuation. We reserve the right to carry out a further valuation and charge a further valuation fee if we decide the valuation is no longer valid.

RETROSPECTIVE LICENCE FOR ALTERATIONS

Your lease says you must obtain the licence **before** any building work commences. If structural work has been carried out without the required licence you have breached your lease. We can still consider giving permission in the form of a retrospective licence for alterations.

The process is the same with the Council issuing a deed of variation as well as a retrospective licence. The exception is you will need to obtain a **regularisation certificate** from Camden's building control department.

You should note that if landlord's consent is denied you will be required to reinstate the property to its former state at your own cost.

LEASEHOLDER SERVICES FEES

You must pay our administrative, technical and legal fees. The fees for producing a deed of variation incorporating a licence for alterations and any a supplemental lease

(if required) are detailed on our website: Making alterations or improvements to your property - Camden Council

The fees you would need to pay are:

- Valuation fee
- Camden's Administration (including administration, lease plan, amendment, technical fee)
- Legal fee (Deed of Variation – incorporating licence, and a supplemental lease)

Other items of expenditure which you may incur include:

- Our premium for the additional area
- Architectural plans
- Surveyor fees
- Structural engineers report (if applicable)
- Access licence (if applicable)
- Your own legal fees
- Statutory consent fees

SUMMARY OF PROCESS

- Leaseholder registers application with Leaseholder Services.
- Leaseholder Services refer application to Neighbourhood Services Manager for consideration.
- Neighbourhood Services Manager seeks technical input from the Contract Building Surveyor.
- Neighbourhood Services Manager consults with residents.
- Neighbourhood Services Manager makes decision on whether application can progress to next stage.
- Neighbourhood Services Manager writes to leaseholder with decision.
- If agreed, Leaseholder Services request valuation fee from leaseholder (if sale of land required).
- Leaseholder Services instruct external valuer to value land being sold (if sale of land required).
- Leaseholder Services sends valuation to leaseholder (if sale of land required).
- If agreed valuation over £30,000, then Leaseholder Services obtains further approval from Executive Director of Supporting Communities (if sale of land required).
- Leaseholder Services request administration fees and statutory consents (if not already supplied) from leaseholder.
- Leaseholder Services arrange for new lease plans to be drafted and agreed with leaseholder.
- Leaseholder Services instruct Camden's external solicitors to draft deed of variation incorporating licence for alterations and supplemental lease of land (if required).
- Camden external solicitor sends draft documents to leaseholder's solicitor for agreement.
- Camden external solicitors issue landlord consent documents (it is only at this stage that leaseholder has landlord's consent to begin works).

The time taken from the registration of the application to the issuing of consent documents can vary significantly. We are therefore unable to provide specific timescales.

There is a separate, simpler, process for obtaining a licence for alterations where only internal layout changes are proposed. This process does not include the requirement for a deed of variation to the lease to be granted.

The team administering the process can be contacted at: leaseholdadminteam@camden.gov.uk for any further information required.