



Home improvements and alterations

- When and how to apply
- Application form and guidance



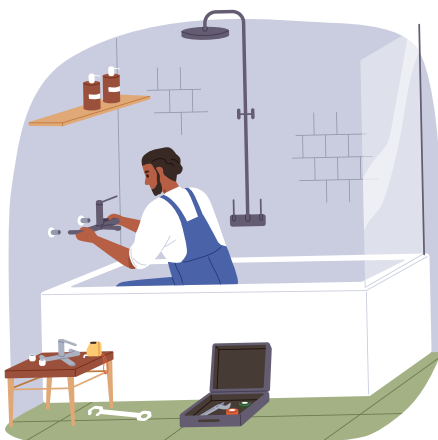
Home improvements and alterations

When and how to apply

You may want to make alterations and improvements to your home and we are usually happy for you to do so if they meet our requirements and you get our permission first.

This permission is in addition to any **Planning Approval**, **Building Regulation Approval** or **Estate Management Scheme Consent** that may be required.

You must apply for these yourself and we will only be able to consider your alterations request once you have all the relevant approvals. **Party Wall Notice** may also be required for some types of work.



What is an improvement or alteration?

An alteration is classed as:

- Replacing a fixture or fitting with one of a similar standard.
- Removing an existing fixture or fitting.
- Removing or replacing any of the existing fabric of the building, its grounds or boundaries.

An improvement is classed as:

- Replacing a fixture or fitting with one that, in our opinion, is of a higher standard.
- Installing a new feature within the property where there wasn't one before – a new shower or a garden shed, for example.
- Extending the property in some way, such as adding a conservatory or porch.

Any improvements or alterations which fall outside of our usual repairs and planned improvement programmes will need to be paid for and maintained by you. We will not contribute towards the cost.

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Applying for permission

Complete the **Tenant Alteration Form** in this handbook and return it to us or call **0800 111 4484** to request a form. Or you can also email housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk with details of:

- your contact information
- the type of alteration you are making
- the work involved
- any supporting documentation (including plans)
- any gas or electrical works and include your contractor's registration details

We may ask for further details, plans and sketches if necessary.

After you make an application

We will acknowledge receipt of your request within three working days.

Our Property Services and Neighbourhoods teams will review your request within 10 working days and contact you if we need more information or want to visit your home. In these cases a revised timescale for considering your application will be agreed with you.

You will be notified of our decision within 15 working days unless a revised timescale has been agreed.

Consent to carry out an alteration is valid for three months. If you wish to carry out the alteration after this time, you will need to make a new application.

Refusal of alterations requests

If we refuse your request, the reasons will be detailed in our decision letter. You can revise your proposal at any time and apply again.

If you are in rent arrears or there are ongoing court proceedings in relation to your tenancy, your request may be placed on hold until the matter is resolved.

We will not grant permission if the proposed works:

- Breach planning or building regulation approval.
- Are considered harmful to the structure and / or long-term maintenance of the property.
- May have a damaging effect on health and safety including fire risks.
- Are thought to be potentially detrimental to the future letting / use of the property.
- Negatively affect neighbouring properties / residents and are not in keeping with their surrounding environment.

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Alterations the council will not give permission for:

- open fires
- wood burners
- gas fires
- installation of down lights into ceilings
- structural works involving load bearing walls
- extensions and brick-based conservatories
- permissions which change the number of bedrooms in a property
- removal of stair banisters

This list is not exhaustive.

If you live above someone you must have written permission from us to install laminate or hardwood flooring. We will need to approve the type of underlay you intend to use. If noise issues occur after installation, we will require you to replace your flooring with a more suitable product at your own expense.

Tenants who do not apply for permission

If you have not applied for permission before carrying out alteration works you will be required to do so retrospectively. This will involve a £25 administration charge. You may also be required to:



- reinstate the property to its original condition
- carry out further works to bring it up to a required standard
- pay a recharge for the council to carry out repair work

Before you start work

Consent from us is different to planning permission or building regulations approval. You will need to check if these permissions are required as well. You must also comply with the regulations of your electricity, gas and water suppliers.

Check the asbestos log for your home to ensure that no materials potentially containing asbestos will be disturbed by your proposed alterations. **If you do not have the asbestos log, please contact Housing Maintenance.**

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For some types of alterations, permission is only given in principle until we have inspected the completed work and signed it off. Once this has been done, full permission will be granted.

We will not support you with the cost of doing the work. You will be responsible for the repairs and maintenance of any alterations unless we accept this responsibility under the terms of the **Tenancy Agreement**.

Carrying out the work

You are responsible for the works so need to ensure that competent people carrying it out. For certain works (e.g. gas and electrics) you will need to use suitably registered tradespeople.

It will be your responsibility to put right any damage caused.

For larger and more complex alterations, we may require on-site inspections while the work is underway.

Alterations with health and safety issues

If we become aware of an alteration where there is a major health and safety issue, we will arrange all necessary works to make safe.

The cost of this and any associated expenses will be recharged back to you.

Poor workmanship

If the work is not of a reasonable standard and we have to make good the property after you leave, you will be recharged.

What happens if you move?

You may be entitled to compensation when you move if you have made improvements to your home with the council's prior permission. However, not all alterations and improvements qualify for this.

Permanent fixtures like baths and toilets become our property and must be left.

Dropped kerbs

These are the responsibility of **Hertfordshire County Council**. More information is on their website **www.hertfordshire.gov.uk** or you can contact **Hertfordshire Highways** by emailing **cschighways@hertfordshire.gov.uk**.

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Application form for alterations and improvements to council properties

Property address, including postcode:

Tenant / Leaseholder name:

Contact number:

Email address:

Please provide as much information as you can below of the alterations you wish to make (or have made) and attach any scale drawings, specifications or quotations.

Tick box if you are requesting retrospective permission. ☐

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Have you checked with the council's Planning Department if the alterations or improvements require Planning or Building Regulations approval?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not applicable ☐

If yes, have you submitted an application for Planning or Building Regulations approval or Party Wall Notice?

Yes ☐

No ☐

It is your responsibility to carry out these checks and get appropriate permission. We cannot consider your application until this has been done. There will be additional restrictions / conditions for homes located in the Estate Management Area and Conservation Area of Welwyn Garden City. (Please attach any permissions that have already been given)

Name and address of all contractors carrying out the work (or those used if seeking retrospective permission):

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Does the alteration involve any gas or electrical work?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, please provide below the Gas Safe / N.I.C.E.I.C registration number of the engineer(s) before permission to proceed can be given (or approved in the case of retrospective permission).

Gas Safe Registration Number(s):

Electrical / N.I.C.E.I.C Registration Number(s):

If you are planning to carry out any external works, such as replacing fencing, erecting sheds, have you consulted with neighbours and included their written permission in this application? (or did you seek this for retrospective permission?)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not applicable ☐

Additional information on alterations requested for permission.

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Application form for alterations and improvements to council properties

Additional information on alterations requested for permission (continued).

Customer's signature:

Date:

The information collected on this form is necessary to administer your application for improvements and will not be used for any other purposes. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is committed to protecting your privacy when you use our services. Please see the privacy notice on our website www.welhat.gov.uk/policies/privacy-notice

Please return this form and any paperwork to:

**Housing Maintenance
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council,
The Campus,
Welwyn Garden City,
AL8 6AE**

or email housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk

