

A GUIDE TO CARRYING OUT ALTERATIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

INTRODUCTION

The standard Grosvenor lease for flats and houses prohibits any alterations that affect the structure or architectural appearance of the property. Notwithstanding this restriction, alterations may be permitted subject to certain procedures and conditions. For freehold properties, Grosvenor approval to alterations is required under the terms of the Grosvenor Belgravia (or Grosvenor Mayfair) Estate Management Scheme.

The reason we control and regulate alterations is for the long term preservation of the external appearance of the buildings, to ensure the highest standards of workmanship are implemented and the buildings remain structurally sound.

The purpose of this note is to give you some general guidance, but for more information please contact your Grosvenor Office Contact.

WHAT TYPE OF WORKS DO I NEED CONSENT FOR?

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| You do not need consent for: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works of repair or renewal where identical materials are being used• Internal or external redecorations (but note that there are strict requirements about the colour and type of paint that can be used externally)• New kitchens, bathrooms or cupboards (provided that existing service connections are re-used) |
| You do need consent for: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submitting a planning or listed building application. For freehold properties prior consent to submitting an application is not required but you do have to provide us with a copy of the application• Works that affect the exterior of the building – extensions, conservatories, alterations to or new windows (including security grilles), walls, roofs, external pipework• Roof terraces, air conditioning or comfort cooling• Security cameras, satellite aerials, burglar alarm boxes, external signage and lighting and boiler flues• Any change of use of any part of the house or flat• Internal alterations that affect the structure of the building including, for flats, the installation of timber/stone or other form of solid floor finish• Pruning or felling trees• For flats managed directly by Grosvenor, the installation of gas fires |
| You are unlikely to get consent for: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Converting pavement vaults or underground rooms into living accommodation (other than utility rooms, bathrooms, stores etc)• Converting a garage into a living room if it is the only garage at the property and capable of taking a medium sized car• Installing or adapting windows or doors (including garage doors) that are unsympathetic to the Conservation Area• Building on more than 50% of the original size of the garden• Erecting mansard extensions in certain mews• Works that adversely affect the light or amenity of neighbouring properties• Linking 2 houses laterally to create a single house (mews houses may be linked to the main house – as in Chester Square and Eaton Mews South)• Constructing sub-basements generally, save swimming pool excavations below lower ground floor level |



WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING APPROVAL?

The first step is normally to appoint an architect, chartered building surveyor or accredited designer to prepare concept drawings. Once you have some initial drawings prepared you can make contact with Grosvenor to establish whether the principles of your proposal are likely to be acceptable.

If they are, or agreed modifications are made, then suitable architectural drawings to a scale of not less than 1:50 need to be prepared and submitted for formal approval. Your submission must be accompanied by a complete application form and payment of the full approval fee. On request, you will be sent a formal application form for landlord's consent to carry out alterations, together with a scale for the Landlord's approval fee. The approval fee is to be calculated based on the cost of the works up to a builders finish (i.e. without decorations and furnishings). In the case of leasehold properties, we do ask that the drawings are submitted to us before you apply to the Local Authority for planning and listed building consents. In determining whether and upon what conditions consent should be granted, we will take into account not only the proposed works themselves but also the extent and nature of recent works carried out at the property and any current or proposed works in the vicinity. This may mean that if approved, works may need to be phased or delayed in order not to cause unnecessary disturbance to nearby occupiers.

If you own a flat or house that has an intermediate landlord between you and Grosvenor, then you must get their agreement before discussing or submitting your proposals to Grosvenor. This is because your occupation is an agreement between you and the Headlessee and not a direct agreement with Grosvenor. Normally, the intermediate landlord will agree to you discussing your proposals directly with us, but that is not always the case.

If your proposals involve adding floor area or substantially enhancing the value of the property, there may be a capital payment implication. In this case the Grosvenor Asset Manager will assess any appropriate payments before approval to the works is granted.

If the works are acceptable in principle, we may forward the application to our retained surveyors, Murray Birrell Limited (MBL) for them to grant a formal conditional approval on our behalf. Details as follows:

Murray Birrell Limited, 207-215 High Street, Orpington, Kent BR6 0PF
Tel +44 (0) 1689 898 288

The letter that they send will give conditional consent – subject to compliance with certain conditions, which must be dealt with before the works start (conditions precedent); e.g. (Approval Fees, Insurance and Planning Consent) and other conditions that are relevant once the work has started; e.g. (compliance with Statutory Health and Safety Regulations, working hours and behaviour on the building site). If a licence for alterations is required, then this must be completed before works start.

Depending on the type of works there are 3 different types of approval:

- Letter and approved drawings – used for straightforward works that do not involve an increase in floor area, change of use, terraces or air conditioning.
- Grosvenor licence (prepared by Murray Birrell Limited) – this is used where there are re-instatement or revocation provisions – for roof terraces, air conditioning or temporary works. Licences may also be required for freehold approvals.
- Solicitor's licence – for major works (including those smaller ones involving additional floor areas), any change of use or where a premium is payable.



TIMETABLE

The issuing of these licences will take between four to six weeks, depending on how quickly the necessary information regarding the Scheme is sent to us by you.

Once all the conditions precedent have been complied with, work can start. Murray Birrell Limited, or Grosvenor surveyors, will make occasional inspections until the works have been completed.

FEES

The full approval fee must be paid when the application form is submitted.

Approval Fees are based on a fee scale, whereby charges are based on the cost of proposed works to a builder's first fix finish (e.g. plastered but not decorated; without cover plates to light switches and socket outlets).

If your property is within a privately owned Grosvenor Mews, there will also be a minimum £500 (excl. VAT) fee to cover additional costs incurred for the cleaning of the surface water gullies at the end of the works.

Depending on the complexity of the works, fees will also be payable to a Grosvenor appointed Structural Engineer, Services Engineer, or Acoustic Engineer, who will assess, review and comment on the proposals prior to commencement of the works. All of these fees are paid directly to the individual consultant and are based on the cost of the works.

If a Licence for Alterations is required there will be additional fees. For in-house licences (e.g. for the use of a roof terrace of a/c plan) an additional fee of between £150 - £250 (excl. VAT) is required. For all other Licences for Alterations our Solicitor's, Boodle Hatfield, bespoke fees must be met.

Depending on the nature and extent of the works proposed, there may be a requirement for a hoardings licence or a scaffold licence. If such a licence is required an additional fee will be payable.

A refundable deposit of £500 is required for all approvals. The deposit, plus interest, is returned once 'as built' drawings have been provided at the completion of the works. Depending on the complexity of the proposed works, a further damage deposit may be requested. The deposit, plus interest, will be refunded after the works have been completed. However, if the works are poorly managed and damage occurs, we may compensate neighbours for such sums as we estimate to be the loss they suffer.

A variety of standard literature is available upon request from your Grosvenor Office Contact including:

- The Grosvenor Specification with which all works have to comply;
- Application form for Landlord's consent to carry out alterations;
- Fee scales applicable to approvals;
- Guides for scaffolding, 'soft strip', satellite dishes, external decorations and colour schemes for mews properties;
- The freehold Estate Management Schemes.



*This is an indication of our policies as at July 2010.
We reserve the right to update and amend these policies at any time and to waive requirements or impose additional requirements in particular circumstances*