

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS POLICY

Aims of the improvements and alterations policy

The following are aims of the improvements & alterations policy:

- To ensure that members know what they need to do if they wish to make improvements and alterations to their home
- To set out what the co-op will do if a member carries out an improvement or alteration without permission to do so

Delegated Authority

- 1 The co-op delegates its Senior Property and Compliance Lead to operate its improvements and alterations policy and authorises them to:
 - respond to improvements and alterations requests
 - take appropriate action where the improvement and alterations policy has not been complied with or where agreed works are not carried out to appropriate standards.

Improvements and alterations

- 1 Improvements and alterations are where a member wishes to make changes to their home at their own cost. The co-op will ensure that members are aware that they need to ask permission to carry out improvements and alterations to their homes.
- 2 An alteration is where a member alters, removes or replaces the fabric of the building or a fixture or fitting. An improvement is where the member replaces a fixture or fitting with one of their own or installs an item where there is none at present.

Applying for and granting permission

- 3 Members are expected to apply in writing to carry out an alteration or improvement. Where possible, the co-op will approve such applications, subject to the following conditions:

- where either planning permission and/or any other statutory approvals are required, the member will be responsible for obtaining them and for providing the co-op with the original copies before any work is carried out
- the member will be responsible for demonstrating compliance with any statutory requirements on completion of the works
- where work on gas and/or electricity supplies is involved, the originals of the safety inspection certificates issued on completion of the work should be provided
- the work will be carried out in compliance with all current statutory regulations and codes of practice etc, together with any other standards and specific conditions set by the co-op
- the member will be required to say how they are going to do the alteration or make the improvements and inform the co-op of any contractors to be used
- any damage caused to other parts of the property during or as a result of the work will be made good at the member's expense
- the co-op reserves the right to require the member to reinstate the property to its original condition at any time, if the terms and conditions of the permission are not being complied with
- the co-op may require the member to reinstate the property to its original condition if they move out, unless it is agreed that the alteration or improvement should remain
- the member will be asked to sign a declaration that they will maintain the alteration or improvement during their tenancy.

Refusing permission

- 4 The co-op will refuse permission for an alteration or improvement where:

- the proposed works are considered to be detrimental to the structure and/or its long-term maintenance
- the proposal will breach planning and/or building regulations and/or the likely environmental impact of the proposal will be detrimental to the surrounding area
- it is considered that an improvement or alteration could result in an unreasonable additional maintenance expenditure for the co-op at some point in the future
- the co-op is not satisfied that the method to be used to carry out the improvement or alteration will not result in achieving appropriate quality or standards of health and safety.

Failing to apply for permission or meeting standards

- 5 If a member does not apply for permission before carrying out an alteration or improvement, they will be required to do so retrospectively. The co-op may require a member to either reinstate the property to its former condition using appropriately qualified contractors within a specified timescale or meet the costs of reinstating the property.
- 6 A member who has been given permission but whose work does not meet standards or conditions can be required to carry out further work within a specified timescale to meet the necessary standards.
- 7 Failure to carry out works requested by the co-op in either of these circumstances could result in the co-op arranging for any work required to be carried out, with the member being liable for all costs incurred.
- 8 In serious cases where the safety and integrity of the structure and/or the health and safety of the member, any household members, visitors or other members of the public are at risk, the co-op will arrange as a matter of urgency for appropriate contractors to carry out any work required. The member will be liable for all costs and dependent on the severity of the problem, action may be taken against the member for a tenancy breach.

Risks to be avoided:

- A member carries out a dangerous or sub-standard alteration or improvement
- The co-op becomes liable for substantial ongoing maintenance costs for an improvement
- The co-op is liable for additional health and safety issues and costs