



## **Making Changes to Your Property**

### **The Design of the Estate**

The Wellington Mills Estate was designed in the 1970s and consists of eight largely self-contained blocks with a number of connecting raised walkways, arranged around two grassed areas which link the Estate together. The two smaller blocks in Oakey Lane and Holst Court which overlook the lawns are reserved for occupancy by the over-55s as are some of the ground floor flats. There are two children's playground areas, one within the Holst Court lawn and the other adjacent to Kennington Road.

Communal heating and hot water pipes run through all of the blocks from a central boiler near Holst Court. There are garage areas below the larger Oakey Lane and Holst Court blocks.

### **Maintaining the Appearance of the Estate**

Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative as a Tenant Management Organisation is responsible for ensuring that the communal parts of the Estate are continuously maintained and improved.

The guiding principle is that any materials or colours used should match the existing fabric of the buildings so that a consistent and harmonious appearance is retained. This rule applies equally to any proposed alterations or improvements which affect the external appearance of an individual property on the Estate. Such changes are subject to approval by the Co-operative's Management Committee (see *Procedure to Follow* below).

### **Materials and Construction**

#### *External*

The main materials used externally are dark brick with deep (rubbed joint) pointing, concrete lintels and areas of pebble-dash, combined with stained timber cladding, windows and doors. Some areas of external timber cladding are backed by breeze-blocks, others by brick. External and internal ironwork in communal areas is largely painted or enamelled black.

#### *Internal*

The party walls between adjacent flats and the floors are formed from reinforced concrete. Other internal walls may be structural and made of brick, or non-structural and made of Paramount board (a type of partition wall based on interleaved plasterboard sections). Both types of construction may appear in the same internal wall: a structural brick bulwark to provide lateral stability is not uncommon, continuing into a non-structural wall.

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No. IP22877R**

**Homes & Communities Agency Reg No C3278**

**VAT Reg: No. 480 – 1086 – 65;**

## Internal Changes You May Make

### *Redecoration*

There are no restrictions on internal redecoration, although individual leases may require leaseholders to repaint all internal painted surfaces within a specified period.

In keeping with the aim of maintaining a consistent appearance, it is requested that the internal parts of the window frames are left as timber and are not overpainted. A lighter internal appearance can be obtained by sanding out the existing dark stain (which does not penetrate very far) and re-varnishing with a clear, water-based acrylic varnish.

### *Fixings*

There are no restrictions on internal fixings such as bookshelves or display cabinets but bear in mind that:

- it is very difficult to drill into the reinforced concrete party walls between flats but the resulting fixings will be very secure
- the Paramount board wall sections contain no cavity (so normal plasterboard fixings will not work) and are quite thin, so are unsuitable for carrying heavy loads
- the electrical wiring runs in metal conduits and can be found in any type of wall, including the Paramount board sections and the reinforced concrete

Leaseholders may replace other internal fixtures and fittings such as sanitaryware by items of equivalent or better quality and value and not less suitable for purpose.

### *Services*

It is a legal requirement that all gas installations should be undertaken by a Gas Safe-registered contractor. Most electrical work apart from changing light bulbs and plugs should be undertaken by a qualified electrician (Part P registered).

Changes to the cold water supply are the leaseholder's responsibility. The council is responsible for the central heating and hot water system and any alterations proposed should be referred to the Estate Manager since these need approval. Concealed pipework may be encased in floor screed or embedded in internal walls.

Leaks are common at Wellington Mills. It is important to identify and label the stopcocks for your property including the hot water cylinder and toilet so you can use them in an emergency. Some stopcocks are outside or in a flat or garage below. Information about the location of cold and hot water stopcocks in each block is available from the Estate Manager. Sewage and storm drains are cleared by estate contractors and charged as a block cost to leaseholders.

### *Flooring*

The Co-operative's consent is required to install laminated or similar flooring unless you live on the ground floor or directly over a garage. You will be required to use an



acoustic underlay if installing wood, laminate or ceramic tile flooring. Guidance on the installation of wooden and laminate flooring is available on the Defra website ([www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)).

If you already have wood, laminate or ceramic tile flooring in your property, please be aware that noise is likely to be easily transmitted to the flat below and could be seriously disturbing to your downstairs neighbours. Problems can be minimised by using carpets or rugs, wearing soft shoes or slippers, and trying not to cause bangs and other sounds which would be easily noticeable by your neighbours. You may be required to install an acoustic underlay.

### *Rearrangement of Rooms*

Any internal rearrangement of the rooms in a dwelling is subject to approval by Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative, acting as managing agent for the Estate on behalf of Lambeth Council.

You will also need Building Control Approval for creating a through-lounge or removing internal walls, for creating a new bath or shower room, or for making any doorways larger. Removal of internal structural walls will require the services of a structural engineer as well as Building Control Approval, and may also require Party Wall / Structure notification to adjacent properties. Creation of additional habitable rooms by internal rearrangement may also require Planning Permission.

## **External Changes You May Make**

### *Maintenance and Redecoration*

External maintenance and redecoration of all properties is the responsibility of Lambeth Council.

The Co-operative's Management Committee has no objection to any resident carrying out external maintenance or redecoration at their own expense, provided that the same or similar materials to the original are used and that the work is done to a similar or better standard. In order to retain the overall appearance of the Estate, external woodwork should be finished to match the existing stain.

Sikkens Cetol Teak oil-based stain should be used to redecorate existing woodwork. Linseed-oil putty will accept the same stain if you are replacing window glass. If the old stain is removed, you may require a coat of Sikkens Teak & Sikkens Walnut stain to match adjacent woodwork. Sikkens manufacture a water-based Cetol stain in Teak and Walnut that complies with new EU safety guidance but this should only be used on previously undecorated woodwork. New extract ventilation grilles must be brown to blend with the existing woodwork/brickwork.

Any unpainted brickwork, concrete or rendered surfaces including those on balconies or patios should be left unpainted. If surfaces have already been painted they should not be re-painted.

Tenants and leaseholders should not nail through balcony asphalt, and are responsible for keeping drain outlets free of debris. Any alteration exposing an asphalt upstand requires that this upstand be made weatherproof using lead flashing or similar.

#### *Alterations Affecting External Appearance*

Any alterations affecting the external appearance of a property are subject to approval by the Co-operative, acting as managing agent for the Estate and may be referred to the council for consent. This includes the erection of satellite dishes and similar equipment (see Leaflet 8).

Any removal of external structural walls will require both the services of a structural engineer and Building Control Approval, and may also require Party Wall / Structure notification to adjacent properties.

Works affecting the external appearance of the building (e.g. window replacement) may in addition require either Planning Permission or written confirmation that the works are permitted. You will need Building Control Approval if you wish to replace windows or doors.

The replacement of windows and external (front) doors may form part of a future major works upgrade to the estate during 2014-2018. Council policy is that leaseholders will not be required to pay for window upgrades which already meet their upgrade specification but would have to pay for replacement if they do not.

#### *Window Replacements*

You should use an installer who is FENSA-registered. New windows must be double glazed. Window replacements should be made of sustainable timber, stained to match the existing colour and of similar design. If a set of patio windows is to be installed, either stained timber or dark brown enamel frames would be considered acceptable whereas white uPVC would not.

#### *External Door Replacements*

External door replacements must meet current fire safety standards as advised by Lambeth Building Control. Where possible they should match the stained wood of existing doors. Lockable security gates are not advised because they delay emergency access to your property. You should always maintain a working smoke alarm, particularly if you have a security gate.

The open architecture of Wellington Mills means that where you can move in two directions to an escape staircase you do not need a self-closer on your front door. Otherwise (in enclosed passages and where there is only one escape staircase) you will need a self-closer. Front doors in the enclosed passages will be replaced for tenants with ones which meet safety standards and are self-closing.



The council's policy on meeting fire safety standards by replacing external doors as part of major works programmes is under consultation (December 2012) so this information should be checked with Lambeth Building Control.

### **Procedure to Follow**

#### *Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative*

As the managing agent for the Estate on behalf of Lambeth Council, the Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative has the right to approve or reject any proposed alterations or additions to a property on the Estate on the specific grounds that the alteration would:

- reduce the number of rooms in a dwelling, make it difficult to let or reduce its market value;
- make the dwelling structurally unsound, unsafe or unhealthy for the occupants;
- detract from the visual appearance of the property or the Estate;
- cause the Co-operative any additional expenditure in day-to-day or cyclical maintenance.

Permission may not be unreasonably withheld but conditions may be attached, relating for example to the standard of work, to obtaining the required Building Control Approval or Planning Permission, or to future maintenance or replacement costs.

In all cases, details of planned works should initially be submitted in writing together with any specifications and/or drawings as appropriate, to:

The Estate Manager  
Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative  
24 Mead Row  
London SE1 7JG

The Estate Manager will notify the Co-operative's Management Committee of any proposed alteration, may arrange for an inspection of the site by a suitably qualified person and may seek advice from the council.

#### *Documentation*

Leaseholders are advised to retain all permissions, certificates and other documentation for any works undertaken so that they are available in the event of future inspection or sale of the property. Tenants should ensure they have written permission from the Co-operative for any works they undertake.

#### *Asbestos*

If you believe or your contractor tells you that there may be asbestos in your home, you should inform the Estate Manager and telephone Lambeth Council on 020 7926 1000 to ask for asbestos advice. Leaseholders will have to pay for a survey should one be necessary. More details are given in a leaflet sent to residents in 2009.

#### *Building Control Approval*



Most cases of building or alterations must be notified to Lambeth Building Control unless you employ an Approved Inspector (see *below*) or a contractor who can self-assess or self-certify for the purposes of Building Control Approval.

Contact:

LAMBETH BUILDING CONTROL

Phoenix House

10 Wandsworth Road

London SW8 2LL

email: [buildingcontrol@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@lambeth.gov.uk) Tel: 0207 926 9000 Fax: 0207 926 0530

[www.lambeth.gov.uk/buildngcontrol](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/buildngcontrol)

There is a fee for Building Control Approval unless the works are to provide disabled access.

To apply for Building Control Approval you will need to complete a *Building Notice* or *Full Plans Application Form* (refer to Lambeth website). You can then arrange the first inspection with the Lambeth surveyor, which must be done at least two days before the work is due to begin. The Building Control Inspector will inspect the works in stages and after completion. It is recommended that Leaseholders pay for a *Completion Certificate* – most solicitors will require a copy before contracts can be exchanged.

#### *Approved Inspectors*

Approved Inspectors are companies or individuals authorised under the *Building Act 1984* to carry out building control work in England and Wales. When you use an Approved Inspector, they will take on responsibility for plan checking and inspection of your building work. The procedure requires you and the Approved Inspector jointly to notify your local authority of your intended building work using what is called an *Initial Notice*. Once this notice has been accepted by your local authority, the responsibility for plan checking and site inspection will be formally placed on the Approved Inspector.

An Approved Inspector will:

- advise you on how the Building Regulations apply to your work
- check your plans
- issue a *Plans Certificate* (if requested)
- inspect the work as it progresses
- issue a *Completion Certificate*

A list of Approved Inspectors can be viewed at the Association of Corporate Approved Inspectors (ACAI) web site (<http://www.acai.org.uk>)

#### *Planning Permission*

Works affecting the external appearance of the building (e.g. window replacement) may require either Planning Permission or written confirmation that the works are

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permitted development. Creation of additional habitable rooms by internal rearrangement may also require Planning Permission.

Contact:

LAMBETH DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Phoenix House

10 Wandsworth Road

London SW8 2LL

email: [tpac@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:tpac@lambeth.gov.uk) Tel: 0207 926 1180 Fax: 0207 926 2509

[www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning\\_applications](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning_applications)

### **Upkeep of Balconies and Gardens**

All tenants and leaseholders are requested to keep clean and tidy any external areas or balconies which form part of their flat, including windows and external woodwork, in accordance with the Wellington Mills *Code of Conduct* (see Leaflet 4).

The gardens attached to individual properties provide a temperate environment and you will find that many plants from warmer climates will happily grow here. You are advised not to plant trees or large shrubs in troughs as their roots may crack the trough eventually.

### **Help We Can Provide**

The Estate Office is always happy to provide advice on proposed improvements or alterations, and on suitable materials to use for finishing external woodwork.

The Estate Office also seeks to maintain a list of reputable local contractors for building, decorating and related services but does not take responsibility for their work.

### **Related Documents**

Management Agreement Chapter 6 Schedule 11 Giving consents

Lambeth Council. Planning and regeneration (leaflet from Library, Lower Marsh)

**Approved by the Management Committee, January 2010, amended December 2012; amendments to sections on flooring and on external door replacement approved by the General Meeting, January 2013.**

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