

PETITION AGAINST UNAUTHORISED ALTERATIONS

SUMMARY

As a collection of neighbouring residents in the Curnock Steet Estate, we are concerned about excessive alterations within some properties, which will have an adverse effect on all of us and the peaceful enjoyment of our properties. Many excessive alterations are done without the written permission of the Camden Council, as leases and tenancy agreements require it. We are simply asking the council to enforce the terms of the leases or tenancy agreements and consider the other residents before making a decision.

We specifically are requesting the council to do the following:

1. Stop those making unauthorised alterations immediately.
2. Ask those leaseholders or tenants to restore properties to their original layout when the changes adversely affect neighbours.
3. Stop providing written permission for alterations without consideration of the following:
 1. Effects on neighbouring properties and communal services as a whole
 2. Adverse impact on water pressure, which is extremely low already.
 3. The high density of short-term occupants in one property.

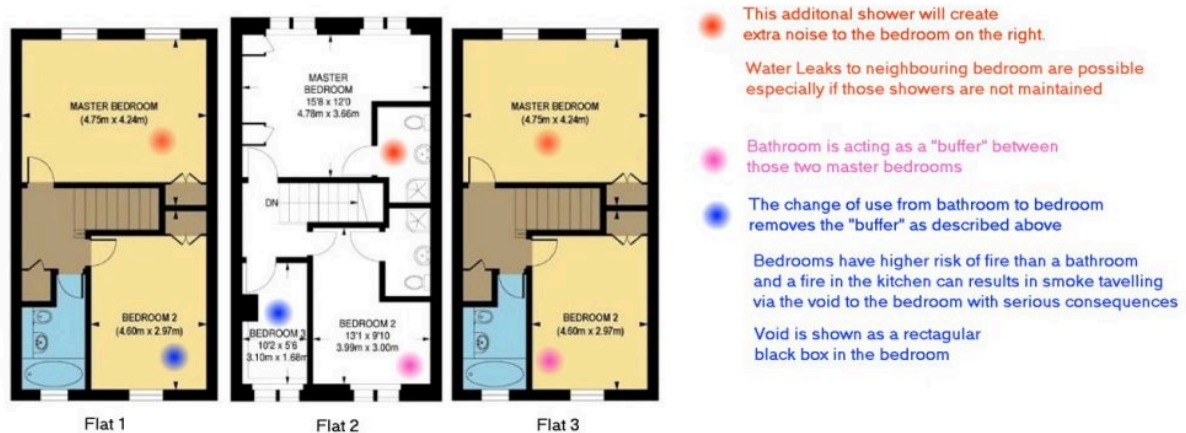
For more information, please click on the tabs below, which are based on the following real example:



NOISE

As mentioned in another tab ('Lease'), those alterations must have written permission and comply with clauses 3.13 and 3.19. That means that the floors have to be covered by carpets (not tiles) and the bathrooms or kitchen with a *cork or rubber covering or other suitable material for avoiding the transmission of noise*. This is not always the case, which has resulted in the neighbouring flats below suffering noise problems.

Look at the illustration below, where the "modified" flat is between two flats with the original layout:



Now observe the same scenario in the following illustration but with an additional flat on the left.



The noise problems worsen for the flats below, especially when the floors are covered with hard flooring.

Also, some leaseholders have moved the kitchen to the living room, meaning that the neighbouring living room and the bedroom below have constant noise whenever someone is cooking or using the washing machine or other electrical appliances.

Another example can be seen below:



Look at some real photos below, which show a breach of lease clause 3.19 because they are using hard flooring. A busy kitchen and living area will definitely create a lot of noise for the two bedrooms located immediately below that area. On top of that, imagine the dryer in operation for 2-3 hours.*



*** IMPORTANT:** We do not imply that those flats do not have written permission or that those particular neighbours have problems. Those photos are used for illustration purposes ONLY.

FIRE RISKS

What are the fire risks of those alterations, especially when the brick walls are removed and replaced with plasterboards?

We are asking this because we are aware of four fires on the estate, which ALL were contained within the room where the fire started, and the reason for that was the internal brick walls and layout.

See below the photos from one of the fires. The first shows the condition of the room after the incident, and the second is the corridor immediately outside the room. The fire damaged the ceiling, but it did not spread to other rooms. If the walls had not been a brick wall, both rooms or the whole floor would have been destroyed.



Can you afford to lose your home and possessions?

WALLS

As you can see from the floorplan above, the particular owner/leaseholder has removed a few walls and converted the bathroom into a bedroom and the downstairs toilet into a shower room. The airing cupboard has been removed as well.

The removal of walls needs written permission per clause 3.14 and someone to check whether those walls support walls. Those alterations, especially when not authorised, can affect the building's stability.

New partitioning walls are not constructed with bricks but plasterboards, which cannot contain a fire the same way as brick walls.

We simply ask the council to stop those alterations that might risk people's lives and homes.

ROOMS

As you can see from the floorplan above, the particular owner/leaseholder has added two additional shower rooms and removed the original bathroom.

The extra bathrooms or shower rooms also increase the risk of flooding to the properties below or next to them due to water leaks. They also put an extra demand for communal central heating and hot water services.

The noise created by those additional showers will affect the neighbouring properties, mainly when the students use them at inappropriate times.

The original layout currently offers a "buffer" between one flat's main bedroom and the neighbouring flat's bedroom. The noise is minimised, especially at night. Since the bathroom is now a bedroom, there are some other problems. The sound of playing music will travel via the void where the pipes are, and it will be amplified to the other flats.

None of the leaseholders or the council has done a survey to assess the everyday noise impact of those changes of use.

FLOORS

As mentioned in another tab, those alterations must have written permission and comply with clauses 3.13 and 3.19. That means that the floors have to be covered by carpets (not tiles) and the bathrooms or kitchen with a *cork or rubber covering or other suitable material for avoiding the transmission of noise*. This is not always the case, which has resulted in the neighbouring flats below suffering noise problems.

For examples, look at the living room/kitchen photos on the noise section.

Unsupervised or unauthorised alterations to pipes might affect communal services for other properties. Heating pipes, for instance, are linked, and six flats use one pipe for the service. Also, rerouting the pipes might introduce flow problems and a lack of pressure for other properties.

HOT WATER

More shower rooms and more people are using the communal services concurrently, making it less likely that the system will be able to cope. Camden Council has already stated that the system can not handle excessive extra demand by a mere 5-10% additional demand. However, more and more people are adding showers, and this is much higher than 10%.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

We have asked the council to provide us with the following information under the Freedom Of Information Act (case reference is **CAM6794**)

In the last ten years, many properties have had excessive alterations within the flats, requiring written permission per lease clause 3.14. Some of those alterations also need to comply with clause 3.19 regarding floor covering to minimise noise to other flats.

1. **How many written permissions have the housing or planning departments given to leaseholders or tenants on the Curnock Street Estate so far in the last ten years?**
2. We do not need to know which flats (it is publicly available), but we need the total number of permissions for the whole estate and, if possible, per block.

TERMS OF LEASES

The following clauses are in every lease for flats inside this estate. Similar clauses are in tenancy agreements. I have listed them below in order of importance:

Paragraph 3.14 of the lease states clearly: “*Not at any time **without the license in writing of the Landlord first obtained** nor except in accordance with the plans and specifications previously submitted in triplicate to the Landlord and approved in writing by the Landlord and to its satisfaction to make any alteration or addition whatsoever in or to the Premises either externally or internally or to make any alterations or aperture in the plan walls timbers elevations or architectural appearance thereof nor to cut or remove the main walls timbers floors or ceilings of the Flat unless for the purpose of repairing and making good any defect therein nor to do or suffer in or upon the Flat any wilful or voluntary waste or spoil*”

Paragraph 3.13 of the lease states clearly: “... *permit to suffer to be done any act deed matter or thing whatsoever **whereby the risk or hazard** of the Flat or the Managed Buildings being destroyed or damaged **by fire shall be increased** so as to require an additional premium for insuring the same or which may make void or voidable any policy for insurance.*”

Paragraph 3.19 of the lease states clearly: “*To keep the floors of the Flat including the passages thereof substantially covered with carpets except that in kitchen and bathroom a cork or rubber covering or other suitable material for avoiding the transmission of noise may be used instead of carpets.*”

Paragraph 3.18 of the lease states clearly: “*Not to do or permit to be done upon or in connection with the Flat or the Managed Buildings anything which shall be or tend to be a nuisance annoyance or cause of damage to the Landlord or its tenants or any of them or to any neighbouring adjoining or adjacent property or the owner or occupiers thereof*”

PETITION FOR UNAUTHORISED ALTERATIONS

As a collection of neighbouring residents in the Curnock Steet Estate, we are concerned about excessive alterations within some properties, which will have an adverse effect on all of us and on the peaceful enjoyment of our properties.

Many alterations are done without the written permission of the Camden Council, as leases and tenancy agreements require it. Those alterations also violate other terms about fittings inside those properties.

We request from the council to do the following:

- 1) Stop those alterations immediately.
- 2) Ask those leaseholders or tenants to restore properties to their original layout.
- 3) Stop providing written permission for alterations without consideration of the following:
 - a) Effects on neighbouring properties and communal services as a whole
 - b) Adverse impact on water pressure, which is extremely low already.
 - c) The high density of short-term occupants in one property.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

SIGNATURE:

TELEPHONE:

Please return the completed copy of the petition using the following options:

1. Read more and sign the petition online at <http://unauthorised-alterations.curnocktra.com/>
2. Scan this document and send it by email to info@curnocktra.com
3. Take a photo and send it by WhatsApp to 07375 817 371
4. Send us a message on 07375 817 371 so we can come and collect it from your flat.

Read more online at <http://unauthorised-alterations.curnocktra.com/>