

Structural openings and internal alterations



Everything you need to know:

It's common these days to want to remove walls and reconfigure your home as it can be a cost effective way to achieve the large open plan modern living requirements of today. It is however to be mindful that it isn't always as straight forward as it may seem and this is where your Local Authority Building control Team can help! Below are some helpful tips and things to be aware of!

What should you consider?

Are you planning on removing a wall? Walls have many functions and it is not just the loadbearing element that needs consideration.

Walls could be loadbearing, supporting walls above, floors, ceiling joists or roofs. Load bearing walls are fundamental to the structure of your home and professional advice from a structural engineer is required.

The wall could be acting as a buttress meaning the wall may not be fully removable.

Walls, especially around halls and staircases could effect fire safety and removing it could result in changing windows within the property to emergency egress windows and the installation of additional smoke/ heat detection. In the worst case scenario it could even result in the fitting of sprinklers to your home.

If your building plans involve shared walls or boundaries you may also need to get your neighbour's formal agreement through a party wall agreement for this you will need a party wall surveyor.

All of the above require Building Regulations approval. Discuss your proposal with your East Suffolk Building Control team to ensure that you will not be effecting the fire safety aspect.

What do you need to do next?

Consult with a structural engineer to get confirmation that the wall is loadbearing and they will then design a beam, column and padstones suitable to take the loads as a result of the wall removal. The steels / beams may need fire resistance by way of encasement which we will advise you on an individual basis.

Consult with your neighbours before starting works to let them know to expect things like noise and dust. This can remove complications and remember that if the work proposed involves the walls dividing your property from your neighbours you will need to appoint a Party wall Surveyor.

Make your Building regulations application here : www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/building-control/make-a-building-regulations-application

Appoint a reputable builder do your research and ask for references or to see previous completed works.

You can start work 48 hours after submitting your application.

Please notify us the day before you require an inspection and we will need to inspect;

- any steels or supporting timbers in place
- any associated padstones and foundations
- Any joists above altered as a result of the works
- The encasement of the beams
- Completion

On successful completion you will receive a certificate of compliance to keep safe should you ever sell your property.

Still have a query? Did you know that we do offer 1 hours free pre application consultation for those who need it. Contact us today at buildingcontrol@eastsuffolk.gov.uk / 01502 523072