

License to Alter

Tenants regularly need to adapt their premises, whether fitting out a new space, reconfiguring an existing layout or upgrading building services. In most cases these works require the landlord's consent through a Licence to Alter, referred to in Jersey as a Licence for Works.

A properly prepared Licence to Alter protects the landlord's asset, clearly defines the tenant's obligations and creates a documented record that informs future dilapidations and reinstatement assessments. Without one, both parties are exposed to ambiguity and potential dispute at lease end.

Portland Building Consultants acts primarily for landlords across Jersey and the Channel Islands, providing technical and commercial advice throughout the consent process.

Why Portland Building Consultants?

Jersey's commercial property market operates under its own legal framework, which differs from English law in ways that are directly relevant to Licences to Alter. There is no equivalent to the UK Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, meaning landlords have more responsibility to protect their position through well-drawn lease documentation and properly recorded consents. A Licence to Alter that is loosely documented carries more risk in Jersey than it might on the mainland.

As a RICS-regulated practice whose surveyors have a significant track record across commercial, retail, industrial and mixed-use property, acting for clients including landed estates, FTSE-listed property companies, REITs and private owners, we understand what landlords need to protect their asset. Jersey's relatively small contractor and professional market means the parties to a Licence to Alter often have existing relationships, and how the process is managed matters as much as the technical outcome. We are experienced in navigating these dynamics efficiently. Tenants are typically responsible for the landlord's surveyor costs under Jersey lease terms, and we run the process proportionately with that in mind.

Our Approach

We act primarily for landlords, assessing proposed alterations and managing the consent process from instruction through to completion. Our services include:

- Reviewing proposed alteration drawings, specifications and programmes on behalf of the landlord.
- Assessing the impact of works on building fabric, structure, services and long-term asset value.
- Preparing or reviewing schedules of condition prior to works commencing.
- Advising on reinstatement obligations and dilapidations implications at lease end.
- Ensuring compliance with Jersey Planning, Building Control and relevant statutory requirements.

- Coordinating input from structural, M&E or specialist consultants where required.
- Negotiating and agreeing Licence to Alter terms, including reinstatement provisions and contractor conditions.
- Providing technical support for insurance claims or legal disputes arising from alteration works.

Who We Act For

- Landlords and property investors seeking to protect their asset through the consent process.
- Institutional investors and pension funds with commercial property portfolios in Jersey.
- Managing agents administering consent processes on behalf of landlords.
- Tenants requiring surveying support to navigate the approval process.
- Legal professionals requiring technical input to support licence drafting or dispute resolution.

The Benefit

A well-managed Licence to Alter process protects the landlord's asset, establishes clear obligations for the tenant and creates a documented baseline for dilapidations assessment at lease end. In Jersey, where the absence of statutory tenant protections places greater weight on the lease and associated documentation, getting this right matters.

Portland Building Consultants provides practical, commercially aware advice, helping landlords assess and approve alterations efficiently while ensuring their long-term interests are properly protected.