

UNDERSTANDING RETROFIT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY



BEGINNING YOUR RETROFIT JOURNEY



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PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE

This is the first booklet in our two-part understanding retrofit and energy efficiency series. The aim of this series is to provide information on small changes that can be made to your home in order to make you more comfortable and reduce the amount of energy you use.

We have also created a series of leaflets including:

- Energy usage at home: what is a kilowatt hour?
- 10 things everyone can do to reduce energy use at home
- Jargon buster: for all things energy related

This first booklet tackles the practicalities of what you need to know before making any major changes to your home.

HOW TO ASSESS MEASURES

You may have already considered retrofitting your home to be more energy efficient, or perhaps you are just beginning to investigate what retrofitting could mean for you and your relationship with energy.

To assist with this, the following sections will detail the factors that you should consider when identifying measures suitable for your home, and the tools that are available to make the beginning of your retrofit journey as straightforward as possible. These include:

- Knowing the archetype/typology of your home
- EPC/Retrofit Assessment
- Whole-House Plan
- Planning considerations
- Finding an installer or delivery partner
- Funding your retrofit

It is important to consider all of the above in order to maximise the impact of your retrofit. Doing so will enable you to identify measures that will have the greatest impact on the energy efficiency of your property/home.

KNOWING YOUR ARCHETYPE/TYOLOGY

When we talk about archetype and typology, we mean what kind of property you live in. In Ealing, as throughout London, there are a variety of property types that make up the total housing stock.

Although seemingly straightforward, identifying the kind of property you live in is an important first step in your retrofit journey as it will inform many of the decisions you will need to make. For instance, it will dictate what can be done to your home to make it more energy efficient as some measures are more suited to certain property types, whilst being unsuitable for others.

Broadly speaking, all smaller energy efficiency measures can be installed in most typologies. However, if you are considering installing larger energy efficiency measures, seek further guidance on which measures are best suited to your property.

The below property types represent those most commonly found in Ealing.

Flats

Usually on one level, a self-contained unit that has a private kitchen, bathroom facilities and a shared hallway/doorway to street.

As a general rule, measures that only require internal installation are most effective for flats. Though, other larger, external, measures may be suitable if installation is agreed upon by all those that share the same block / building.

Property Type	Description
Purpose built	A unit that was built within a building that was always designed to contain flats
Converted	A self-contained unit or a former corporate/commercial building, where the initial purpose was not to be separated into flats i.e., a single house
Studio	All facilities and living space located in a single room



KNOWING YOUR ARCHETYPE/TYOLOGY



Houses

A property built on multiple levels with no shared hallway/door to the street – self-contained with private access to all facilities.

The vast majority of measures detailed in this guide will be suitable for a house. It is, though, important to consider the characteristics of your house to determine which measure is the right fit for you. If you share a neighbouring wall, please ensure all relevant permissions (called Party Wall Notices) are granted.



Property Type	Description
Mid terrace	A house in a row of houses sharing two walls with neighbouring properties
End of terrace	At the end of a row of terraced houses, share a wall with one neighbouring house but have an external wall not shared with another home
Semi-detached	A house that shares a wall with a neighbouring property, but also has an exposed external wall
Detached	A freestanding house with no walls shared with neighbouring properties



EPC / RETROFIT ASSESSMENT

There are tools to help you understand which measures will have the biggest impact for your property. Some of these can be accessed for free, whilst some will cost money. It is always helpful to consider readily available resources to help your retrofit journey.

What is an EPC?

An EPC, or Energy Performance Certificate, is a document that rates the energy efficiency of your home. It is mandatory for properties that are being sold/let in the UK to have an EPC. This is to keep a record of the energy efficiency works that have been carried out on the property, and to inform potential buyers/renters of the energy performance of that property. This means that, eventually, every home in the UK will have an EPC. It is recommended to check EPCs to see if installed measures are confirmed or assumed, as the accuracy will show if the area was inspected (ie, loft, cavity, or underfloor insulation) or assumed to be absent or present without visual confirmation.

An EPC is valid for 10 years and will need to be renewed once expired.

An EPC will tell you:

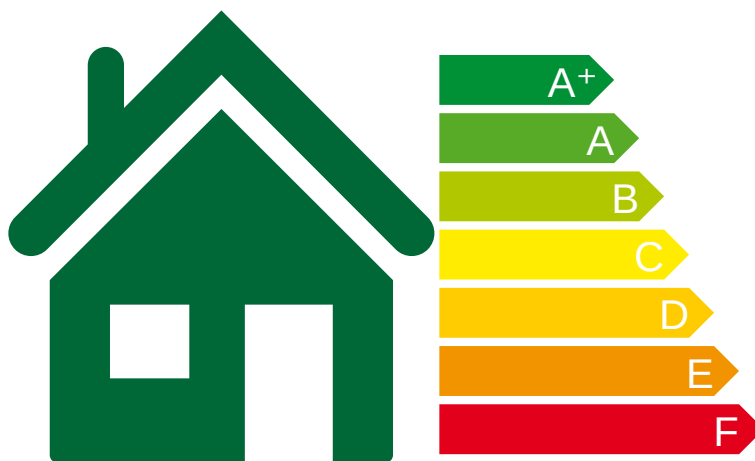
- The energy efficiency rating of your home (these span from A-G, with A signalling most energy efficient, and G representing the least)
- Notes on the rental potential of the home (must be a minimum EPC D to let a property)
- A breakdown of the features of the property with an energy efficiency rating of these
- Measures to improve this rating (including typical cost and advice on available grants)
- Estimated energy expenditure and savings* (*energy prices may not reflect current energy prices)
- Details of the assessor that completed the certificate

EPC / RETROFIT ASSESSMENT

My home doesn't have an EPC, how do I get one?

You can arrange for a Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA) to visit your property and provide an energy efficiency rating for your home. To find an EPC assessor within distance and bookable for your home, enter your postcode on the [UK government site](#).

An EPC assessment will typically take about an hour and cost from £35–£120. With an EPC in place, you will have a baseline understanding of your home's current energy efficiency, as well as recommended measures to increase this rating.



Please note, if you are in a tower block of flats, EPCs can be inaccurate, as there is not a checkbox for high rise flats. As such, the software's modelling cannot accurately depict energy use. Additional modelling, such as air tightness and SAP or EPC+ may be required to be accurate. This will not affect your ability to buy or sell a flat, but will impact the measures and outcomes recommended.

To find out if your home has an EPC, visit [this UK government website](#).

RETROFIT ASSESSMENT AND WHOLE-HOUSE PLAN

Like an EPC assessment, the aim of a whole-house plan is to identify a range of works that would ensure your home is performing to the maximum levels of energy efficiency as possible. A qualified individual will inspect your home to determine how energy efficient it is and recommend potential measures to be installed. Some Retrofit Assessors may also be qualified to complete and file an EPC.

However, unlike the installation of single measures, the idea of a whole-house plan is to coordinate the installation of multiple measures throughout the property to ensure an all-encompassing, transformative, retrofit can take place. All installations are completed with the whole home in mind – considering which measures will complement others in reaching the goal of improving the energy efficiency of the whole home.



To complete the recommendations is an extensive, and often expensive, undertaking, but it is always worth checking if there are available grants and schemes that you can take advantage of to do this. Information on available grants to Ealing residents can be found on the [Ealing Council website](#).

What does it cost?

According to Checktrade.com, a retrofit assessment typically takes around 1-2 hours and ranges from £120-£240, depending on the size of the property.



RETROFIT ASSESSMENT AND WHOLE-HOUSE PLAN

Getting a whole-house plan



To get a preliminary whole house plan based on publicly available data and input from you, you can visit Ecofurb, which is a home renovation service that has been created with support from Ealing Council.

To find out more, visit: www.ecofurb.com

A full survey and bespoke whole house plan can be booked through the [Ecofurb website](http://www.ecofurb.com) when you are ready to take the next step in your energy efficiency journey.

After receiving your obligation-free whole house plan, you may choose to get quotes for works from Ecofurb's contractors or to take your recommendations to market to find your own suppliers. If you do choose to follow up the recommendations, Ecofurb will connect you with their approved contractors, with costs varying on the type of measure and extent of the works required.



Although Ecofurb is a service that Ealing Council have worked with, other suppliers can be found on Energy Saving Trust or Trustmark, if you wish to use a different service provider.

What does it cost?

As per the [Ecofurb website](http://www.ecofurb.com), at the time of publish, a home survey and plan will cost around £540.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

When is permission required?

Planning permission is needed when the work being carried involves:

- building operations (eg structural alterations, construction, rebuilding, most demolition);
- material changes of use of land and buildings;
- engineering operations (eg groundworks).

Flats will always require permission for external works, as permitted development does not apply to them. Alterations to windows, doors, rooflines or front elevation may also all require permission.

'Development' does not usually include interior alterations, unless the building is listed or the internal works involve changes to the party wall.

Does all development require planning permission?

If the work being carried out falls under the statutory definition of 'development' then planning permission will be required. There are different types of planning permission which include:

- local authority grants
- national grants of permission by the General Permitted Development Order
- local grants of planning permission through Local or Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders.

Depending on terms of leases, internal structural changes may require both Freeholder and planning permission.

Where can applicants find out more?

As the local authority delivers the planning service for the local area, you should contact Ealing Council first for any enquiries regarding planning. Professional planning officers will be able to help advise and interpret planning law and policy on how best to move forward with any application. Additionally, planning consultants can give you further advice.

You can find more information about planning on [Ealing Council's website](#).

FINDING AN INSTALLER OR DELIVERY PARTNER

Ecofurb

Ecofurb is a home renovation service and has been created with support from Ealing Council. They help homeowners plan energy efficiency improvements and give impartial advice, focusing on which improvements will have the greatest impact on carbon emissions, bring the most value, and how they will work together.

This service operates throughout London. More information can be found on the [Ecofurb website](#).

Local Heroes

Local Heroes use a dedicated home team to match you with skilled, local tradespeople who have been vetted. The work is backed by British Gas and guaranteed for up to 12 months.

Find out more more about Local Heroes by visiting their [website](#).

FindaTrade / CheckaTrade

Websites such as [FindaTrade](#) and [CheckaTrade](#) allow homeowners to find the right tradesperson. These sites provide access to thousands of builders and tradespeople that have been rated by previous customers. It also allows you to find someone quickly and you can compare multiple quotes to find the best one for you.

For more information visit these websites:

www.findatrade.com

www.checkatrade.com

FUNDING YOUR RETROFIT

The council are leading multiple grant funding opportunities for low-income and vulnerable residents, as well as offering collective buying opportunities, such as Solar Together, to help residents retrofit their homes to be as efficient as possible.

You can find details on all grants available to residents in Ealing by visiting our regularly updated [website](#).



Additional information and advice can be found at the following websites.

[Energy Saving Trust](#)

[UK Government - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)

[Climate Change Committee](#)

[Simple Energy Advice](#)