

Building standards role during construction

This note is included with your Building Warrant and Approved Drawings to clarify some changes in the Building Standards System.

The Building Standards system is intended to ensure that building work on new and existing buildings meet reasonable standards and these standards are set out in two Technical Handbooks – Domestic and Non-Domestic.

The Building Standards system, generally, is to protect the public interest and is not intended to provide protection to a client or owner in a contract with a builder.

The system does not therefore control building work, but sets out the essential standards to be met when building works take place. The Application process is to ensure that the proposed building works meet the Standards.

The first responsibility of the owner is to ensure that he/she has the right to build. In the case of building at or near the boundary, any projection over the boundary, relating to roofs or foundations, requires consent from adjacent landowners. Any construction built on to, or relying on support from, adjacent buildings requires the owner's consent. The owner should make sure they have the necessary consents before they build.

The culture of the system has changed and places more responsibility on owners of properties to ensure that the work is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and the Technical Standards.

The Council will operate an inspection regime, but inspections during construction and after completion will be limited to the minimum necessary to ensure compliance with the Standards: not to ensure that the works are being carried out to the satisfaction of the owner. That is the owner's responsibility.

The Council will risk assess each situation to determine a suitable inspection regime.

Applicants are still required to notify Building Standards when works commence, when drainage is being laid and when works are completed. The exact inspections required will be indicated on the Construction Compliance Notification Plan (CCNP). This document is provided to the applicant & agent along with the approved building warrant.

Inspection of work by Building Standards Officers cannot be relied upon as supervision of works, supervision of builders or supervision on quality of work or finishes, since Building Standards inspections are mainly concerned with compliance with the Technical Standards.

Having regard to the above, the Council would strongly recommend that you engage the services of a professional or other competent person for advice on contractors, contracts, site supervision and any other aspect of the works you deem necessary to ensure a successful outcome to your project and investment.

It will be your responsibility to advise the Council when works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans and it will be your responsibility to submit a Certificate of Completion to that effect.

It would be of benefit to have professional advice prior to submission of a Certificate of Completion. Building Standards Surveyors will inspect the work at this stage and consider the Certificate for acceptance or rejection.

It is in your interest to ensure that the works are completed in accordance with the approved plans, to avoid duplication of inspections and the difficulties associated with having a Certificate of Completion rejected.

Please also note that where electrical works are to be carried out, a Certificate of Construction or a BS 7671 Certificate completed by an “approved electrician and accompanied by a copy of the installers trade card and calibration certificate for the electrical testing equipment ” should be submitted with the Certificate of Completion.

The undertaking of any building project can be a huge investment and a serious strain on your time and resources. It is important that the work is organised and carried out in a competent manner by suitably qualified and competent persons. There is a wealth of professional help available and it is recommended that you seek that help or advice before embarking on such a major project.