



**WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui



Building Consent Process

Accepting and Processing Building Consents

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Building Consents – Step 1: Applying for a Building Consent

What is a Building Consent?

A Building Consent is a document from the Building Consent Authority (BCA) in your region, confirming that your proposed building work is permitted to proceed within the restrictions of any conditions that may be contained in the Consent. A Building Consent is required for any structures that are not specifically exempted from consent requirements by Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004.

You can obtain a list of what is exempt from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment website or by phoning the Building Department at the Council. If there is any doubt as to whether your project is exempt or not, please check with the Council.

It is an offence to carry out building work that is not exempt except in accordance with a Building Consent.

Project Information Memorandum/Consent Conditions and Advice Notes

A Project Information Memorandum (PIM) is a document that lets the applicant know important issues that may affect their building project; this application is voluntary. The issues that must be addressed are stipulated in the Act and include, but are not limited to, Resource Management Act requirements, and stability and flooding details.

However, the Council must still consider these issues when processing your Building Consent and the requirement of the various plans, that control building in our region, will be identified in your consent as either conditions or advice notes. It is critical that these conditions are followed and advice notes should be carefully observed.

Completing Your Application

Every application must be made on the prescribed form; these are available from our Customer Service Centre or on our website:

www.whanganui.govt.nz

The form must be completed in full, including the list of building code means of compliance; this should be completed by the designer.

The Council has firm requirements on the standard that the application form, plans and supporting documentation must meet. The application form must be completed fully in clear, tidy handwriting. A comprehensive list of supporting documentation can be found on the insert sheet provided with the application form. Do not hesitate to ask for help with any part of the form.

Together with your application form, you are required to provide two copies of the plans. It is important that your plans are clear, concise and drawn to scale on white paper in black ink. Pencil drawings will not be accepted. Plans should NOT be drawn on graph paper under any circumstance.

The plans should include:

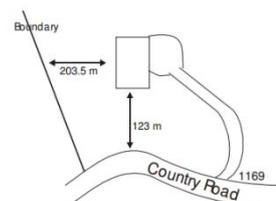
- Location plan
- Site plan
- Floor plan of each floor (if there is more than one), an elevation of each exterior wall
- Drainage plan
- Foundation layout
- Sufficient cross-sections to show the full nature and extent of the work
- Full set of construction details of specifications

Location Plan

The location plan should show the location of the site in relation to known points. It need not be to scale.

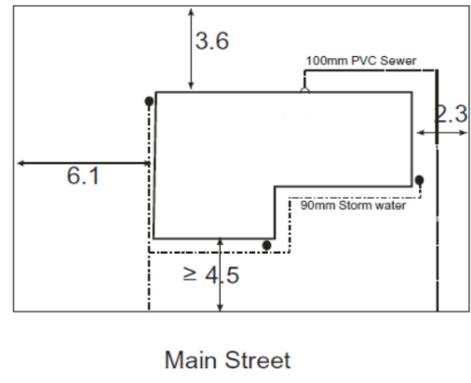


OR



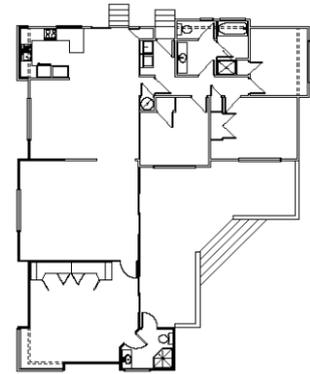
Site Plan

The site plan must be drawn to scale and should show all buildings on the site and their relationship to the boundaries. Normal scale is 1:200. We recognise that this is not always possible for buildings on country properties. Please ask the Duty Building Officer what details are required if this is the case with your application.



Floor Plan – Scale 1:50 or 1:100

The floor plan should clearly show doors, windows, the rooms on that floor and the intended use of that room. Show the fittings within the room such as benches in the kitchen, bath and basin in the bathroom and the position of the pan in the toilet compartment.



Elevations – Scale 1:50 or 1:100

Provide an elevation of each exterior wall showing all openings, doors etc. For new dwellings and substantial additions, a weather-tightness matrix must be supplied for each elevation. The matrix is a scoring system that determines if your choice of exterior cladding must have a drained and ventilated cavity behind it or not.

A fact sheet on the weather-tight matrix is available on request.



Cross-sections – Scale 1:50

Supply cross-sections of the building that clearly show the method of construction, details of the materials intended to be used and accurately show floor levels and adjacent ground levels.

New Buildings or Major Extensions

When erecting a new building or a major extension, the following additional information is normally required.

- Full bracing calculations
- Details of all insulation (H1 calculations)
- Drainage plans:
 - If the property is rural, a septic tank assessment form completed by a Council approved assessor. A fact sheet on septic tank systems is available on request.
- Ground bearing capacity tests:
 - Engineer designed foundations may be required if the ground bearing capacity is found to be unsuitable. Generic type sheds do not generally require this type of foundation design.
- Specifications must be specific to the project:
 - If using a Master Spec type form, the details not relevant to the Building Consent must be deleted. This also applies to any manufacturer's specifications, E2 pages etc. All non-relevant material removed.

Restricted Building Work (RBW) and Licensed Building Practitioners (LBP)

If your project includes structural or weather-tightness work on a residential dwelling, the work may be classed as 'Restricted Building Work'. This type of work must be designed and built (or supervised) by a Licensed Building Practitioner (LBP).

Your application will need to include a design certificate from the LBP that carried out the design work.

You will also need to provide Council with a list of LBP's who will carry out the building work. It is best if the names and registration numbers of these licensed tradespeople are provided on the consent application form.

You can provide the list after your consent has been issued but you should be aware that the work must not start until you have provided Council with names of the LBP's. This can be done by completing the form supplied with your approved consent.

It is possible in some circumstances to get an **Owner Building Exemption** for DIY work that is Restricted Building Work. More information is available on the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment website www.building.govt.nz. Applications that include Owner Building Exemption must be lodged with completed forms 2b and 2c attached. These forms are available on our website.

Producer Statements

Any part of the structure that is outside of New Zealand Standard 3604 (the standard for light timber framed buildings) or the compliance documents, may require a Producer Statement. Besides the supply of Producer Statements for commercial buildings, PS1 statements may be supplied for a number of specific design elements in residential dwellings.

These may range from membrane roofs to steel beams over a garage entrance. The supply of a Producer Statement in no way compels the Council to accept an alternative solution. The Act stipulates that Council must be 'satisfied on reasonable grounds' that any building element or design meets the provisions of the various codes. As such, Council has sole discretion on acceptance of Producer Statements and technical reports.

Change of Use

The change of use of a building, whether that change required building work or not, will trigger the 'Change of Use' provisions of the Act. Section 114 and 115 of the Building Act 2004 stipulate the matter that must be considered for any change of use of a building (this includes things such as converting a residential dwelling into a commercial premises or a sleep-out into a hairdressing salon).

The applicant will need to consider all the requirements of Section 115(b). The specific degree of structural strengthening required (if any) cannot be assessed until a comprehensive evaluation of existing building strength is made.

It should be noted that the Act specifies that any work required must be 'as nearly as is reasonably practicable' to the modern code. This allows for discretion on the part of the Territorial Authority should there be features of the building that would preclude full strengthening to be completed.

Compliance Schedule

Under the Building Act 2004, buildings require a Compliance Schedule if they contain certain systems or features e.g. fire safety systems, lifts etc. These are known as 'specified systems'. This applies mainly to commercial buildings but if a residential dwelling contains a cable car, it will require a Compliance Schedule.

A list of specified systems is available under the Compliance Schedule section on the Building Consent Application Form. The items discussed above will require regular maintenance to ensure that they retain their efficiency and effectiveness. If your building contains specified systems, you must complete the section in the application form called Compliance Schedule and supply with your application, the maintenance, inspection and reporting conditions for each system. An application form is available from our Customer Services Centre or on our website.

Once in place, the system will require a yearly Building Warrant of Fitness.

Additional Requirements for Commercial and Industrial Buildings

Commercial buildings require additional considerations by the Council, as they frequently, by their very nature, are accessible to the public and/or have large numbers of occupants. The Council is required by the Building Act 2004 to consider access for people with disabilities, fire egress, structural behaviour and other matter over and above the usual issues checked in a single residential building.

Commercial Buildings – Earthquake Prone Buildings

The Whanganui District Council has an Earthquake Prone Building Policy, which has been formally adopted by Council. Any building built prior to the implementation of New Zealand Structural Standard 4203 (1976) will be subject to this policy.

An applicant is advised that if they are considering alterations to a building that may be subject to this policy, that they should discuss the issues with a Council officer as it may be prudent (or necessary) to incorporate strengthening elements in the building work. Buildings undergoing a change of use will require strengthening regardless of where they fit within the earthquake-strengthening schedule.

Commercial Buildings – Use by the Public

If the building is classified as a Building for Public Use under the Building Act 2004, it is illegal for members of the public to use the building until the Code Compliance Certificate has been issued or a Certificate of Public Use applied for and granted by the Council. Please check with the Council when submitting the consent whether this restriction will apply.

Commercial Buildings – Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities

Section 118 and Schedule 2 of the Building Act 2004 outline a large range of commercial buildings, to which access and facilities for people with disabilities are to be provided for. This schedule describes most commercial buildings and/or building use.

The objective of New Zealand Building Code Section D1.1(c) is to:

“Ensure people with disabilities are able to enter and carry out normal activities and functions within buildings”.

They are not to be discriminated against due to their disability, which may be due to a short-term accident or be a long-term disability. Council cannot waive this requirement and any disagreements must be decided by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, by way of a Determination (a quasi-legal opinion on a Building Act related matter).

Facilities may include, but not limited to, accessible shower and/or toilet compartments, ramps, handrails, reception counters, corridor widths etc. It is advisable to check what will be required at design stage, as many of these features take up considerable space and expensive redesign may be required if they are not detailed on the submitted plans.

Commercial Buildings – Structural Design and Producer Statements

Any building work outside the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC), BI Acceptable Solution, will require specific design by a suitably qualified engineer. A Producer Statement for Design (PS1) will be required at application. The Building Consent will not be issued until they are received (by an approved author) and approved for the project.

Engineering plans and details for the structural design are required to be submitted and signed by the engineer providing the Producer Statement. The

engineer will state on the Producer Statement that the structural design will achieve the requirements of the NZBC and/or relevant New Zealand Structural Design Standards and any assumptions e.g. ground bearing capacity.

Council may require that the design is peer reviewed to confirm the structural design meets the requirements of the relevant structural standards. This peer review will be regardless of the supply of a PS1. All peer review costs are borne by the applicant.

If site investigation has included a geotechnical investigation and subsequent specific foundation design, that geotechnical report may be subject to a separate peer review.

The Act stipulates that Council must be 'satisfied on reasonable grounds' that any building element or design meets the provisions of the various codes. As such, Council has sole discretion on acceptance of Producers Statements and technical reports.

Commercial Buildings – Fire Rating Behaviour and Egress

Fire safety in a commercial building is assessed under the NZBC, C Clauses. Any work in a commercial building will require a fire report (sometimes termed a fire philosophy) detailing compliance with these clauses. This will be required at application stage. Section 112 of the Building Act 2004 must also be addressed for any alterations to an existing building.

Any fire rated construction e.g. walls, floors or ceilings, are to be shown on the plans, sections and construction details provided. The proposed work may be 'just an office fit-out', but this can affect means of escape and the positioning of sprinkler and smoke alarm heads.

Any design outside the **C** documents will be regarded as an 'alternative solution' and the Building Act 2004 requires that they be sent to the New Zealand Fire Service Design Review Unit (DRU). In this case, an additional full set of construction drawings will be required as the DRU retain any plans sent to them.

Commercial Buildings – Lift Requirements

A lift may be required depending on the area of the upper floors or the occupant loads of the upper floors. If the use or occupant load changes, the building will be assessed to determine whether it complies for lift requirements.

Commercial Buildings – Trade Waste

Trade waste issues are more likely to arise in industrial and commercial activities where products are being manufactured, processed or refined e.g. meat and dairy processing plants, timber treatment plants, furniture manufacturers etc. However, these issues can also apply to smaller uses such as restaurants, paint shops and truck yards.

The potential discharge will be assessed at consent processing time. However, if you consider that discharges from the proposed premises may require a trade waste permit, please contact the Council early in the process as this may save expensive design review and changes e.g. a truck wash bay and slab may require an oil interceptor sump/trap to contain oil washed from the vehicles. The oil is required to be contained, then collected and disposed of without contaminating the storm water or sewer system.

Whanganui District Council has a Trade Waste Bylaw that governs discharges to the sewer system from Industrial and Commercial premises.

Commercial Buildings – Health

A Building Consent containing food premises e.g. cafés, restaurants, bars etc., will require approval under the Food Hygiene Regulations 1974 and the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. This will be reviewed at the Building Consent stage.

The use and occupant load of the building will be required to assess the safety and facilities in the building. Most of the previous sections discussed will apply for the consent review and the Environmental Health Officer will require specifications, plans and elevations detailing the following:

- Surface finishes
- Ventilation
- Hand wash facilities
- Cooking and cleaning facilities e.g. sinks, dishwasher

- Grease trap and backflow devices
- Menu specifying type of food being prepared and served

An additional application form is required for a Health Licence before the public is permitted to use the premises.

Hairdressers, Funeral Directors and Camping Grounds also require an application to the Environmental Health team for approval.

Dams

Regional Councils are required by the Building Act 2004 to accept, process and issue Building Consent applications for large dams within their area.

Large dams are defined as “any dam that impounds more than 20,000m³ of water and has a wall higher than 3 meters”. Dams smaller than this are not large dams and are exempt under Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004.

Lodging Your Application

Once you have completed your application form and have attached all the required information, all Building Consent applications can be delivered to the Customer Services Centre in the Municipal building at 101 Guyton Street or by mail to P O Box 637, Whanganui 4500. If you are sending the application by mail, please ensure that the required deposit is attached.

When lodging the consent in person, one of the Building Officers will check the application to ensure it meets the required standard. Applications that do not meet the required standard will be rejected. Your application and plans will be returned to you and our Officer will clearly explain what is required before the application can be accepted.

Once the documentation is in order and the deposit/fixed fee has been receipted the application can be lodged. The date that the application is formally accepted after technical vetting is the date that the 20-day clock starts.

Consent Fees

This depends on the type of application, the cost of work involved and the level of detail provided.

Our charges are based on the length of time it takes to process an application and include costs such as:

- Levies payable to the Department of Building and Housing (payable on all applications \$20,000 and over)
- Levies payable to BRANZ (payable on all applications \$20,000 and over)
- Time spent processing the application
- Number of inspections required (type and number vary depending on the project)
- Issue of Code Compliance Certificate
- Issue of Compliance Schedule (if applicable)
- Development contribution (if applicable)
- Vehicle crossing (if applicable)
- Street damage deposits (refundable on completion)
- Water and sewer connection (if applicable)

An estimate of the fees involved may be provided, however the final cost will not be known until the application is processed. If, after you have applied for consent, you decide not to go ahead a fee may apply.

Timeframes for Processing

Once accepted, the Council has 20 working days to process your Building Consent. A working day is defined in the Building Act 2004 and is Monday to Friday excluding statutory holidays and the days between the 20 December and 10 January inclusive.

The working day 'clock' may be put on hold if further information is required for the Building Officer to ensure your project meets the requirements of the NZBC. The number and length of these deferrals is mainly in your control. A fully completed application form with good quality supporting information will help in minimising any deferral delays.

MultiProof Building Consents – Timeframes for Processing

A MultiProof consent is a Building Consent for a standardised design that is intended to be replicated many times. MultiProof approvals are issued by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

MultiProof is a statement by the Department that a specific set of building plans and specifications complies with the NZBC. Under the Building Act 2004 (as amended in 2009), Building Consent Authorities must accept a MultiProof as evidence of Building Code compliance.

A Building Consent is still needed for a building with MultiProof approval. The role of Building Consent Authorities is to:

- Approve site specific details, including foundations and utilities;
- Ensure that any MultiProof conditions have been met; and
- Undertake normal inspections during construction.

The Council has 10 working days to issue a MultiProof Building Consent, based on information from Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment website.



Building Consents – Step 2: Processing Your Building Consent

Requirements of the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC)

Once the documentation has been accepted, it will be scrutinised by the Building Department to ensure that when the project is complete it will meet the requirements of the NZBC.

The code requirements can be met in two ways:

1. By way of an acceptable solution:

An acceptable solution is a method contained in the compliance documents issued by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment. The documents can be found on the department's website:

www.building.govt.nz/compliance-documents

A building element constructed in the way specified in the compliance documents is deemed to comply with the requirements of the NZBC.

2. By way of an alternative solution:

This method of meeting the NZBC requirements is by way of an alternative solution. An alternative solution requires proof of compliance. It is your responsibility to provide the proof, not the Building Consent Authorities task to find it.

Who Processes Your Consent?

Your application may need to be seen by several Council officers. For example, Planning, Environmental Health Officer or perhaps a Structural Engineer. Applications with inadequate details will be deferred for further information. No work will be done on your consent until this information is received. The time required for these officers to check your proposal varies and has a bearing on how long it takes before your consent is issued.

Resource Management Act Requirements

An important part of the checking of your Building Consent is the identification of any Resource Management Act requirements under the various Plans that contain rules to minimise effects on the environment.

The Plans that will have most influence are the Whanganui District Plan and Horizons Regional Plan (for on-site wastewater disposal issues). The Planners check that the building and activity are permitted and comply with the relevant standards such as earthworks, on-site parking, noise, maximum height, shading, outdoor living and service courts, lighting and setbacks.

A building activity that is not a permitted activity, or is a permitted activity but does not comply with the relevant standards, may be required to obtain a Resource Consent as well as a Building Consent to authorise the building consent process and activity. If the Building Consent is ready before the Resource Consent the Building Consent will be issued with a Certificate (Section 37) that prevents the commencement of the building work before the Resource Consent is issued.

Council May Refuse to Issue a Building Consent

Occasionally, in cases where Council is not satisfied after requesting further information that either the information has not been supplied within a reasonable timeframe, or the details supplied are not sufficient proof that the work will comply with the Building Code, Council may decline the Building Consent. A letter explaining the reason the Consent has been declined will be sent to the applicant with an invoice for processing costs.

Identifying the Required Inspections

After checking the documentation for conformance with the NZBC, the Building Officer will identify what inspections are required to ensure that the building is erected to comply with the stamped approved plans.

These inspections are at key stages and usually checks are done at a point in the building process that cannot be checked at a later stage. For example, the mesh and reinforcing bars in a concrete floor slab must be checked before the concrete is poured. If such an inspection is missed, it is often impossible to go back and the Building Consent Authority will not be able to issue a Code Compliance Certificate.

As well as the checks by the Council Building Officers, there may be third party inspections required. These will typically be by a geotechnical professional, to confirm ground conditions; an engineer, to confirm the engineering design is being constructed to plan; or an inspection body, such as Fire Protection

Inspection Services, to check fire alarm installation. Once again, these inspections must occur at the scheduled stage of the project.

Invoices and Payments

Once your consent has been approved, a letter confirming the outcome will be sent to you. An invoice for the balance of payment due will be attached.

Council Will Not Grant Your Consent until Fees and Levies Have Been Paid

You can choose to make payment at our Customer Services Centre or via Internet banking and have the consent issued at the front counter or the consent will be mailed to you.

You will be advised if there are any Resource Consent issues that mean the work cannot start (Section 37 Building Act 2004), otherwise once you receive the Building Consent document, work may begin. You should keep the stamped approved document on-site at all times.

How Long is the Consent Valid?

Work must start within 12 months after the date the consent issued. If work has not started within the 12 months, the consent will automatically lapse and you will need to apply for a new consent. You may apply for an extension of time to start the work but your application must be submitted to Council before the lapse date.

Please note that if the project has not been completed and signed off with a Code Compliance Certificate within 24 months of the consent being granted, the Council must at that point make a decision to either issue or decline the Code Compliance Certificate. Please refer to the 'Inspecting and Certifying Building Consent Work' booklet for more information.

Content of Your Building Consent Document

The issued Building Consent will be in a number of sections:

1. The Building Consent Authority Building Consent:

This is the document at the front of all documentation. It will have the project address, the type of building project, the legal description of the lot and the date of issue. The attached typed pages will list the Building Consent Conditions and Advice Notes, the schedule of required inspections and a Form 6 – Application for Code Compliance Certificate. The application for a Code Compliance Certificate is to be filled out and returned to Council when the work is completed.

2. The Specifications:

The designer's requirements on what must be used during the build process. For example, '30mpa concrete is to be used when constructing the floor slab'.

3. The Plans:

These will have the Council's stamp and Building Consent number on them. These are the plans that have been checked against the NZBC requirements and approved as meeting the code. They are the plans that must be used as construction drawings and should be kept on-site at all times. The stamped plans may also contain notes of clarification from the processing officer. An item that is unclear of the plans but explained in the text may be overwritten to ensure it is constructed as the designer intended.

The Building Consent Process

This booklet covers the first two steps of a four-step process. Our booklet 'Inspection and Certifying Consented Building Work' will guide you through the final steps. The booklet includes information on arranging for inspections at set stages during construction and how to apply for your Code Compliance Certificate when the building work is complete.

