

A General Guide to building in Stratford

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Introduction

This guide has been designed to address the minimum standards of the MBIE self-assess checklist and we have designed this to be your one stop shop guide to the Building Consent process.

What is a building consent? Why do you need it?

A building consent is confirmation that proposed building work will comply with the [Building Code](#) and is issued under the [Building Act 2004](#).

The purpose of these legislative requirements is to ensure that New Zealand buildings are soundly built and meet an acceptable safety standard, the needs of the building users and environmental sustainability.

When considering a building consent we consider aspects of the property that could have some effect on the way the work is carried out and ensure the design has taken into account features and conditions of a specific site (e.g. steepness or exposure to wind).

The building consent must be obtained before the work starts.

Some work may be done without a building consent. However the work must still comply with the [Building Code](#). [Schedule 1](#) of the [Building Act 2004](#) describes work that is exempt, e.g.

- Patio or deck where it is not possible to fall more than 1.5 metres
- Garden trellis less than two metres high
- Kitchen cupboards
- Home maintenance, e.g. replacing spouting or piece of weatherboard.

For further information on [Schedule 1](#) go to www.building.govt.nz

The building consent process

Part A: Information to check before you build

a. Where to find consent application forms.

The Stratford District Council's website www.stratford.govt.nz has all the information for applying for building consents. From the Building Services page you can access via links application forms that detail the plans and documentation that you need to supply for the online application process through Simpli (<https://simpli.govt.nz>). Alternatively you can pick up Application forms from the Council's Service Centre at 61-63 Miranda street in Stratford.

For queries either phone us on 06 765 6099 or email building@stratford.govt.nz.

You can also find useful information about applying for building consents and download publications from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website www.building.govt.nz. This Building Performance website has a range of useful information including planning a successful build and applying for building consent.

If you are not familiar with building plans and establishing compliance with the Building Code you may need to engage a design professional (e.g. an architect) to supply the required drawings and information, and to apply for a building consent on your behalf. For complex projects we recommend that you seek professional advice.

b. Building on land subject to natural hazards.

In Stratford we have a number of natural hazards. Sites can range from building on a slope that is prone to slips, building in a flood plain or near rivers or in a snow or high wind area. All natural hazards need to be thought of before applying for your consent.

The building consent authority must grant a building consent if the building consent authority considers that the building work to which an application for a building consent relates will not accelerate, worsen, or result in a natural hazard on the land on which the building work is to be carried out or any other property; and that the land is subject or is likely to be subject to 1 or more natural hazards, and it is reasonable to grant a waiver or modification of the building code respect of the natural hazard concerned.

c. Processing costs of a building consent

All consents have associated costs depending on your requirements of your build, it is advisable that you check the Council's fees and charges to make yourself familiar with any costs you may be up for, if you find this hard to understand contact the appointed building administrator and they will help clarify this for you.

d. 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 New Zealand Building Code. 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.

e. Restricted building work and licensed building practitioners

If you plan on doing some work yourself you will need to list this information on your application.

Restricted building work includes;

- Design work relating to Primary structure or moisture management system in houses or small to medium apartment buildings.
- Fire-safety systems for small-to-medium apartment buildings.

Building consent applications that contain restricted building work must be carried out or supervised by licensed building practitioners who are licensed to carry out or supervise that kind of building work.

Types of building work that involve the construction or alteration of the primary structure or moisture management system in houses or small to medium apartment buildings are:

- Bricklaying or block-laying
- Carpentry
- External plastering
- Foundations
- Roofing.

For design work that is restricted building work the licensed building practitioner must supply a 'Memorandum from licensed building practitioner: Certificate of design work' covering the design work that is restricted building work to the owner who must submit it to the Council with their application for building consent. A guide for filling in this form is also available [here](#).

Owner-builder exemption

Where a building consent application involves restricted building work (RBW) the work may be undertaken by an owner builder. Instead of getting certificates from your designers and contractors, you will have to provide Council with a statutory declaration detailing the RBW that you intend to undertake.

This document requires a degree of building knowledge in order to fill it out correctly; it is also a legally binding declaration that must be witnessed by a person that is able to witness such documents, such as a Justice of the Peace, or a solicitor. The statutory declaration will be kept on the property file at Council, and it will be publicly available to any person who wants to look at the file. It is an offence under both the Crimes Act 1961 and s.369 of the Building Act 2004 to give false information in a statutory declaration, so all of the information contained in the statutory declaration must be true and correct to the best of your knowledge.

f. Project information memorandum

You can apply for a PIM any time before you complete your application for a resource consent or building consent. The best time to apply for a PIM is before starting preliminary design work, so that we can give you accurate information about the consents and approvals you may need.

What you need to apply for a PIM

The more information you give us about your project, the better guidance we can give you.

Examples of the kind of information we need are:

- drawings and plans that have the:
 - drawing date, number and title
 - designer's name
 - address of property
- the location and external dimensions of the proposed and existing buildings
- proposal to dispose of stormwater and wastewater
- precautions to be taken if work is proposed close to existing drains, sewers, wells and water mains
- volumes of proposed disturbed earth
- location, dimension and gradient of parking, manoeuvring, and vehicle crossing
- areas of impermeable surfaces
- location and size of outdoor living and service courts
- locations of streams, lakes and wetlands and their riparian margins (protected vegetation)
- position of protected trees or vegetation
- height in relation to boundary controls and maximum height controls.

The application should also include:

- approvals from Heritage New Zealand if applicable
- a project description that is accurate and describes all work involved in the project
- evidence of ownership or rights over the property and if you are not the owner, authorisation to apply for a consent

We may ask for further information, depending on your building proposal.

g. Checking for resource consent requirements and other permissions

Depending on your build you may require a resource consent. A land use consent is required where all or part of the proposed building activity does not fully comply with the relevant rules in the District Plan. The District Plan rules are available on the Council website, www.stratford.govt.nz or from Building Compliance and Consents, Council service centre.

Please be aware there are costs associated with a resource consent. You will find details in the fees and charges on the council website. It is also advisable to contact the council planner and discuss your application in more detail.

h. Enquiring about making a consent application

If you are still having trouble understanding the forms or process, or are just unsure of all the above information, you are more than welcome to make an appointment with a Building Control Officer, they will sit down with you and run through all your documentation, please be aware you must be up front and provide accurate information so they can in return give you the best advice they can. Missing information can lead to some surprise unknown costs.

i. Compliance Schedule

If you are applying for a building consent for a commercial building you may need a compliance schedule. If the project includes adding, altering or deleting one or more of the specified systems detailed on the Building Consent Application Form, a new or amended Compliance Schedule is required.

The Compliance Schedule details the performance criteria for each system and the inspection, maintenance and reporting procedures to ensure that systems continue to perform as required for the safety of users of the building.

The Compliance Schedule systems and the performance standards for these systems are listed on the Building Consent. The full Compliance Schedule is issued with the Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) together with the Compliance Schedule Statement which states the specified systems contained in the building and notes where the Compliance Schedule is kept. The Compliance Schedule Statement is required to be publicly displayed for 12 months after the compliance schedule is issued and is then replaced by a Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOF).

It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOF) is displayed where it can be seen and read by building users. A copy together with all Certificates issued in respect of the specified systems is to be issued to Council on each anniversary of the Compliance Schedule ([Section 105](#))

j. Certificate for Public Use

A Certificate for Public Use (CPU) may apply to building work where the public can enter. For a public building, the public cannot be permitted to enter until the Code Compliance Certificate is issued. The only way a portion of the building can be used is to obtain a Certificate for Public Use.

This is a document issued by Council to allow parts of a building to be used by the public before the Code Compliance Certificate is issued. The CPU will only be issued if the portions of the building involved are safe and sanitary and safety features, such as fire warning systems, are in place and operational. CPUs are intended to allow significant development to be built and occupied in stages.

k. Alterations to existing buildings

Under Section 112 of the Building Act, a BCA must not grant a building consent to alter all or part of an existing building unless it is satisfied that, after the alteration, the building will (among other things) comply As Nearly As is Reasonably Practicable (ANARP) with the Building Code provisions relating to means of escape from fire and access and facilities for persons with disabilities.

Section 112 of the Building Act also gives territorial authorities some powers to allow alterations to existing buildings. (If you intend to change the use of the building different provisions apply.)

To determine whether an existing building complies ANARP with the Building Code, means of escape from fire and access and facilities for persons with disabilities after the proposed building work has been carried out, BCAs and TAs will need information on the building's current level of compliance.

l. Change of use, extension of life and subdivisions

For change of use, extensions to specified intended life and subdivision of existing buildings, there are specific considerations that Council is required to make decisions on. MBIE guidance on change of use, and extension of life is linked below. In the case of a subdivision of land to be effected by the grant of a cross lease or company lease, or by the deposit of a unit plan, the territorial authority needs to be satisfied that the building will comply ANARP with the provisions of the building code relating to means of escape from fire, access and facilities for persons with disabilities and protection of other property.

Links: [MBIE Guidance to Change of Use, and Extension of Life](#)

Part B: Getting Your Consent

a. Lodging the consent application

Once the application form is completed you may lodge your application by one of the following methods;

- Submit the application via the Sinpli portal
- Mail the application to Stratford District Council, P O Box 320, Stratford 4352.
- Drop the application at our front service desk staff at 61-63 Miranda Street, Stratford. These applications will be handled in the same way as mail applications.
- Phone us on 06 765 6099 to make an appointment with an officer to lodge your application.
- Apply online at building@stratford.govt.nz

Here at Stratford we have upfront fees, these can be paid by cheque, direct deposit when invoiced or Eftpos up front over the service centre counter. This will still need to be assessed when after you have lodge the consent, final payments will depend for the estimated number of inspections required for your project. You can contact us on 06 765 6099, for an estimate on the overall cost before your lodgement if needed.

If the value of the building work in your application including GST is over \$20,000, levies are payable to the Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ). The rate for this levy is \$1.00 per \$1,000 of the project value.

If the value of the building work in your application including GST is over \$20,444, levies are payable to MBIE. On 1 July 2020 the rate for this levy reduced from \$2.01 to \$1.75 per \$1,000 of the project value.

These levies are collected by Council on behalf of BRANZ and MBIE

On receiving your application it will be receipted with a date and time stamp. The application will be initially checked by an officer within 48 hours for completeness before being accepted, this is to ensure that all the required information has been supplied. Any applications that are missing information will not be accepted. Mail applications will be returned by mail, hand delivered will be told to come and pick up if not accepted as per [Regulation 7\(2\) \(b\) \(c\) & \(d\)\(1\)](#) They can be re-submitted when you have all the required information.

Applications submitted through the Sinpli portal are vetted and may be accepted, or rejected, or a submission request for further information may be sent.

After this check the application is given a Building consent Number (BC) when it is entered into the council computer system.

You should quote this number whenever you write to or contact the Council about your building consent application. Your application will be linked to the records for the property.

b. Processing the consent application

Your application will be assessed by officers with specific skills and knowledge. These include building, plumbing and drainage, structural, resource management and others, this is a more detailed check of the information supplied than is done during the initial application vetting process. We will evaluate the various aspects of your building consent application to ensure it meets the requirements of the Building Code as required by the Building Act.

The [Building Act](#) requires that the building consent authority must grant a building consent, if it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the provisions of the building code could be met, if the building works are properly completed in accordance with the plans and specifications that accompanied the application. This must be done within 20 working days from the receipt of a complete application.

There is a requirement for some applications to be sent to the [Fire Engineering Unit of Fire and Emergency NZ \(FEU\)](#). There are no additional fees to pay if your application needs to be sent to the FEU. The designer of specified systems or specific engineer design elements may require that additional inspections are carried out at certain stages of construction. These are to be advised with the application. Council may accept [Producer Statements](#) from previously approved qualified persons for construction & design. [Producer Statements for construction review & design review](#) will only be accepted from [CPEng Engineers](#).

c. Checking resource consent requirements and other permissions

We check your proposed project to see if it requires other permissions, e.g. [Resource Management Act](#) and District Plan requirements.

A land use consent is required where all or part of the proposed building activity does not fully comply with the relevant rules in the District Plan. A subdivision consent is required to legally divide land or buildings for separate ownership, such as new lots or sections. In either of these cases, if you have not already applied for and been granted a resource consent, we will advise that you do so. Resource consent must be obtained before the building work can start.

The District Plan rules are available on the Council website, www.stratford.govt.nz or from Building Compliance and Consents, Council service centre.

We also check for compliance with the Council's bylaws and other legislation for things such as vehicle access, water reticulation, and public drainage, in the case of commercial premises, matters such as health, trade waste, building specified systems are checked.

d. What is a RFI

If the officers find they need more information to support the consent application, a request for further information (RFI) letter will be sent. At this point the consent application will be suspended, this means that the '20 day time clock' stops – it will not restart until all the information requested is received back to the officers and accepted. Therefore it is super important that you fully and accurately complete your consent application form and that all the attached information is present to avoid any possibility of delays during this processing.

e. Additional fees

Occasionally, as we work on your application and seek further information, we may find that there are additional areas to investigate (e.g. the need for vehicle access assessment, a compliance schedule or an assessment by an environmental health officer) requiring additional fees. If this is the case, we will invoice you for payment before the building consent is issued. Additional charges may be made when an application is suspended. An invoice (or request for payment of fees) also means that the '20 day time clock' stops – it will not restart until all the fees requested are receipted – please ensure you always quote your building consent reference number when making payment – especially online – as if we cannot match your payment to your consent this may delay receipt of your payment and further delay issue of the consent.

f. Reasons for delays or refusal of your consent application

There are a number of reasons why your application may be delayed or refused:

- an incomplete application form
- required or requested information not being provided
- non-payment of application fees

We can't guarantee that there will be no delays but the chance of this occurring is significantly lessened if you thoroughly check your application using the check sheets provided before you submit the application.

Once your application has been assessed as conforming to all the required criteria, and all necessary fees have been paid, it will be granted and a building consent and/or project information memorandum issued.

g. Conditions on consents

All building consents are issued subject to the condition that agents authorised by the building consent authority are entitled to inspect the building work at all times during working hours or when building work is being done.

In addition, there are four other conditions that may be imposed on a consent. These are:

- Where the consent has been granted subject to waivers and / or modifications of the building code – [section 67](#)
- Where the consent is for building work on land subject to natural hazards – sections [72](#) and [73](#)
- Where the consent is for building work over two or more allotments – [section 75](#)
- Where the consent is for a building with a specified intended life – [section 113](#).

Part C: Construction Process

a. Once your Consent is Issued

Once your building consent is issued and you have obtained any other approvals required, such as a resource consent, then you may start work on your building project.

It is very important that the building consent documentation is read and you are clear about the requirements on the consent. It will contain a list of inspections that need to be made by Council officers during the building process, as well as list the [Producer Statements](#) required from specialists (typically engineering services). The specialists must provide documentation of the inspections they undertake in support of their producer statement.

Work must start on your project within 12 months after the date the consent was issued. If we haven't heard from you before then we will send you a letter reminding you that work must be started and asking if you intend to proceed with the work. You may decide that you will not do the work, in which case the consent will lapse, or you may apply for an extension of time to start the work. An extension of time to start work may be granted in some circumstances after an officer has reviewed the building consent file.

If we do not hear from you within the stated time, or we refuse you an extension of time, the consent will lapse. This means a new consent would have to be applied for and issued before any work could be carried out.

b. Making Changes to a Building Consent (Amendments and Minor Variations)

If you decide to make a change during construction of your building, either an amendment or a minor variation to the consent will be required.

A minor variation is defined as a minor modification, addition, or variation to a building consent that does not deviate significantly from the plans and specifications to which the building consent relates. In short it is a change that clearly has little impact on compliance with the building code and may be approved by the Building Control Officer on site.

Minor variations must be applied for and approved before the work can proceed

Examples of a minor variation are:

- substituting one internal lining for a similar internal lining
- substituting the type of timber treatment
- minor wall bracing changes
- a change to a component (for example, fixing bracket)
- a construction change (for example, the framing method around a window when the window is changed to a door)
- changing a room's layout (for example, the position of fixtures in a bathroom or kitchen)
- changing one brand of insulation for another

An amendment is required where the work is outside the scope of the original consent, such as additional footprint or increase in floor area, construction method, or significant changes to the layout. An application for amendment will be required for the new work to be undertaken, and revised plans and specifications are required to be submitted to Council for approval prior to the work being carried out. When approved, amendments become part of the building consent.

An amendment is applied for in the same way as a building consent.

c. Inspections

At various stages during construction you will need to arrange for building control officers to inspect what has been done to check that the building work complies with the building consent. The inspection requirements are listed on your building consent.

Someone will need to be on site while inspections are carried out. Approved plans, specifications, associated documentation and any amendments will need to be available to the Building Control Officer during inspections.

You can book your inspection anytime by calling us on 06 765 6099. You should plan ahead to ensure that you can get an inspection booking when you need it to avoid building delays on site. Inspections will not be guaranteed for last-minute bookings. You will need to supply the following information when booking an inspection:

- BC number (this is the unique number given to each building consent)
- Your name
- Contact number
- Address for inspection
- Type of inspection required (from the list attached to your building consent)

The owner, agent or person carrying out the work on behalf of the owner will be provided with a copy of the building officers' inspection findings, usually by email. Re-inspections may be required if the officer is not satisfied that the work meets the requirement of the building consent and the [Building Code](#). These may incur additional charges if inspections exceed those estimated when you lodged your building consent application.

In addition to the inspections by Council officers, inspections may be required by specialists, including structural, geotechnical and fire engineers. This would have been agreed at the consent processing stage. You will need to liaise directly with your specialist about the inspections he/she will need to make. Your specialist may not be able to give you the required [Producer Statement](#) if you have failed to arrange for inspections at the appropriate times.

If inspections have been missed, contact us to discuss possible alternative evidence you can provide to show that the work is [code](#) compliant. A subsequent inspection may not be able to be done until it has been verified that the work already in place complies with the building consent.

The work must be carried out in accordance with your approved building consent. If you wish to change some aspect of the project you must obtain an amendment to the building consent before the work is carried out. The process for obtaining an amendment is the same as obtaining the original consent. It is very important that at the time of the inspection the building consent documents accurately reflect what has actually been built.

If the work has not been done in accordance with the building consent the inspector may issue a notice to fix or a site instruction stating what is required to be done.

The following are the types of Standard inspections that may be required depending on the type of building work;

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation – Concrete footings – before placing any concrete for foundation walls or footings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation – Timber Piles or Poles – before placing any concrete for pile foundations (including driven piles).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blockwork – retaining walls and foundation blockwork before blockfill.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Underslab Drainage – drainage in / under the floor slab.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre Pour Slab – before placing any concrete for concrete floor slabs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subfloor Timber Framing – before covering any sub-floor framing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skeleton Wall and Roof Framing – before fitting building wrap to framing. Includes membrane substrate.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage – Building to Council Sewer Connection) or Drainage – (Building to Septic Tank and Effluent Bed) – testing any drainage work before back filling and before covering any field drains or effluent beds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-cladding – Wrap / Cavity / Battens / Flashings – on completing of the building wrap with flashings/tapes installed and before fitting any external cladding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-Height Masonry (Bricks) – brick work at half height.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Plaster Exterior – before application of any coating to the external cladding system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-line Building/Plumbing – before fitting internal linings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-line bracing – post line bracing while fixings are still visible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-line firewall– where fire-rated walls are included, certification from the fire design engineer (PS4) or sufficient inspections to verify correct installation of specified linings and protection of penetrations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterproof Membrane – inspection of installed wet-area membranes before installation of finish surfaces such as tiles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid Fuel Heater – pre-installation for inbuilt fires, final for inbuilt fires, final for freestanding fires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquid Fuel Heater – final
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final – final inspection on completion of all building work following a formal application for a code compliance certificate (form supplied with approved consent documentation). Final inspections may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final – Residential ○ Final – Commercial ○ Final – Accessory Building (Sheds, Sleepouts) ○ Final – Other (e.g. Deck, Retaining Wall, Conservatory)
<p>Note, if you are using nonstandard construction methods ie. Straw bale, log cabin and cob inspection requirements will be discussed during consent process and site meetings.</p>

d. What is a Code Compliance Certificate

Receiving a Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) means that the Building Consent Authority (BCA) is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the building work complies with the building consent and, where applicable, that the specified systems in the building are capable of performing to the performance standards set out in the building consent.

Council must decide whether to issue a CCC after two years of granting the building consent has elapsed, or any further period that may be agreed between the owner and Council. Applications for extensions of time must be made and approved within the two year timeframe.

The owners must apply for the CCC as soon as practicable after the building work is completed ([Section 92](#)). The Application for Code Compliance Certificate ([Form 6](#)) is sent out with the Building Consent and is to be completed in full and signed. Alternatively you can apply through the Simpli portal or download the Form 6 from the Council website. Energy Certificates, Producer Statements, Records of Work, as laid drainage plans etc are required to be attached if applicable. If the building contains specified systems the application should also include evidence that the systems are capable of performing to the performance standards listed in the building consent.

On receipt of an application for CCC, which is the day the BCA receives the application over the counter, by email or through the Simpli portal, Council starts the clock and has 20 working days to decide whether or not the Code Compliance Certificate will be issued. This process follows the same procedure as a building consent and may require the clock to be stopped for RFI's and/or payment of additional fees and charges. If the CCC is not able to be issued you will be notified in writing explaining the reason.

There are a number of reasons why your application may be delayed or refused:

- Building works do not comply with the Building Code
- Required inspections have not been completed
- an incomplete application form

- required or requested information not being provided
- non-payment of application fees
- Missing documentation such as gas or electrical certificates
- Incorrectly installed specified systems that don't match the consented plans.
- Compliance Schedule as built plans showing location.

Part D: Other Matters

a. Stratford Building Consent Authority Complaint Policy and Process

At Stratford District Council we welcome your feedback to help us enhance our performance. Any complaints will be investigated to ensure that we have done everything we can to assist. We take complaints seriously and we use your feedback as an opportunity to learn and to improve our services.

If you feel we have let you down during your consenting and construction stages in some way, please contact us in writing to let us know what has happened and what you would like us to do about it. Please ensure you include your name, return address and a contact phone number so we are able to get in touch with you.

To contact us you can:

- Email us at stratforddc@stratford.govt.nz
- Write to us at:
Stratford District Council
PO Box 320
Stratford 4352

b. Determinations

If you are still unhappy or choose to use an alternative route to settle a matter of doubt or dispute, you may apply to MBIE for a Determination. Visit [determinations](#) for further information on this service and to download the form needed to apply (Form 14). In some cases you can seek a determination from MBIE where there is a matter of doubt or dispute or lay a complaint with MBIE regarding a building control function. Queries of this nature should be made to MBIE directly.