

# Making a full plans application for planned work to a domestic property

Revised July 2018

## Building Regulations - Guidance note

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### Applying for approval

You can use a full plans application for building work to a domestic property. You will need to provide us with existing plans, proposed plans and specifications. You will normally need to employ an architect or building surveyor to provide the drawings and specification required. You can make the application yourself, or your agent (for example your architect) can do this for you. We will need full name and contact details for both you and your agent. If your application includes your agent's details, we will communicate with them about your application.

### Making your application

When we receive your full plans application, we will check that it has sufficient information. If it does not we will contact you and explain what is still needed. For us to accept a full plans application we need:

- A filled-in application form signed by either you or your agent.
- Two copies of the appropriate drawings and specifications.
- The correct fee.

### Fees

For a full plans application there are normally two separate fees. The first fee is called a plan fee and is payable with the application. The second fee is called an inspection fee. For a full plans application, which attracts an inspection fee, we will send you an invoice for the inspection fee once you start the work and after we make our first visit.

We have a range of set fees for some types of work, such as new homes, extensions or alterations that meet specific requirements (see separate building control fees sheet). Other works are based on an estimated cost of works. For fees based on an estimated cost, you will need to give us a written estimate. If the cost of the work is over £10,000, we will also need a full broken down estimate.

### Assessing your full plans application

We will assess your plans and specification for compliance with the building regulations. We aim to deal with your application within our target response time of 21 days for applications for domestic properties. In certain circumstances (for example for applications involving complicated projects) and if you agree, we may extend the target response time. After assessing your application, we will either approve it or reject it.

### Rejections

Often we cannot approve an application first time and will reject it. This can be for a number of reasons, for example because there are no structural calculations or because the design does not cover fire-safety issues correctly.

If we reject your application, we will send you, or your agent, a notice of rejection. This notice will list our reasons for rejecting your application, and will give you details of the appeals procedure. Before we can approve your application, you will need to send us new drawings with the outstanding issues corrected, or provide any additional information required. Our target response time for re-assessing the new drawings is 14 days.

### Notice of approval

When we approve your application, we will send you, or your agent, approval documents which include a notice of approval and a copy of your drawings stamped 'approved.' We advise you to keep these, as you may need them if you want to sell your property in the future.

### How long do you have to start the work?

You have 3 years from the date we receive your application to start the work. If the work is not started within three years, your application will



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become “of no effect”. This means that you will not be able to use these plans if you want to carry out this work. Instead, you will need to submit a new application and fee.

If your application is for the erection of two or more dwellings or buildings that contain dwellings, and you have not started work to the superstructure of one of these dwellings within 3 years, the application for that dwelling will become “of no effect”. You will not be able to use these plans for that dwelling. If you want to carry out this work, you will need to submit a new application and fee for that dwelling.

## The work on site

As soon as you make your application, and pay the correct fee, you can start the work on site. You do not have to wait for us to approve your plans before you start work. However, if you wait for your approval you may prevent having to make costly amendments on site.

It is very important that you, or your builder, tell us when the work is at certain stages so that we can inspect it. You may be committing an offence under the building regulations if you don't do this.

The stages of work you must tell us about are (as appropriate):

- When you start work.
- When you dig the foundations.
- When you pour the foundation concrete.
- When you fit a damp-proof course.
- When you lay and compress the site hardcore (for example, with a roller).
- When you lay the concrete subfloor.
- When you lay the drainage system (both before, and after backfilling).
- Before covering any sound insulation measures.

- Before covering any above ground structural elements.
- When the work is finished.

If the site surveyor considers other inspections necessary, he will let you know what these are.

We may ask you to have tests carried out on drains and private sewers to make sure that there is no contravention of the building regulations. We may also take samples of the materials being used in the works to make sure they meet requirements.

You must notify us at least 5 days before you occupy the building. You must also tell us that the work is finished within 5 days of completion.

We will send you a full plans completion certificate following a completion inspection, providing all building regulation fees have been paid, when we judge that the work is complete and, as far as can be ascertained by visual inspection, there are no contraventions of the building regulations. You should keep the completion certificate in a safe place, as you will need it if you sell the property in the future.

## Making changes to your application

If you wish to change the work to the dwelling either on site or by changing your approved drawings, you should notify us of the change as soon as you can. The work on site and on the drawings should normally be the same. If you wish to make a change, we will work with you and your builder and architect or building surveyor. Amendments to an approved plan will require a reassessment by our surveyor, so you will need to send us updated drawings and, when approved, he or she will send your agent an amended approval.

Note if any work differs from your planning approval, you should contact Belfast Planning Service to discuss this.

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