

Basingstoke & Deane

Building Control

Introduction

If you are reading this booklet you must be considering undertaking some building work. The following text should help to guide you through the Building Control process involved. Whilst not totally comprehensive it addresses some of the more obvious concerns you may have and indicates the level of service that we aim to achieve.

The Building Control Service operates from Basingstoke and Deane and is staffed by professional experienced surveyors with an extensive knowledge both of local conditions and issues and a wide range of building types and construction techniques. The Building Control Section have a quality system are registered with BM TRADA and meet the requirements of ISO 9001:2000.

If you are unable to find the answers to your building regulation questions within this booklet then please contact us either by post, fax, E-mail or telephone and we will endeavour to provide the information you require.

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Building Control
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Basingstoke
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RG21 4AH

Tel: (01256) 845237

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E-mail building.control@basingstoke.gov.uk

Partner Authority Scheme

Some important points you may wish to consider about partnering with Basingstoke Building Control:

- The purpose of the Partner Authority Scheme is to give you, the Partner Company, a one to one relationship with Basingstoke and Deane Building Control for plan approval aspects of all construction projects, irrespective of its location in England and Wales
- An officer is designated to your company and will deal with all your applications
- It eliminates inconsistency, uncertainty and delays
- We will act as an efficient bridge to the local authority where the project is to be built on behalf of your company
- We will assess your plans for the project and issue the decision notice, which leads to Automatic Building Regulations approval by the local authority Building Control department inspecting the work
- It is our aim to reduce unnecessary delays by liaising with the Building Control department inspecting the work and provide professional advice to you, our partner company, during design.

BUILDING CONTROL **WHY? WHEN? WHAT? HOW?**

Why are building regulations and building control necessary?

The simple answer is that Building Regulations and hence the Building Control Service are necessary to ensure that an acceptable standard of health and safety is achieved for people in and around buildings. They also require adequate access and facilities for disabled persons as well as specifying measures to control energy consumption. However, it must be remembered that they are not a control of quality. You should make your own supervisory arrangements in this respect should you consider it necessary.

When will you need to apply?

The regulations apply to any 'building work' and therefore you will need to make an application before proceeding. The definition of 'building work' is contained within the regulations. However, in general terms it covers the erection and/or extension of any type of building (with certain exemptions see 'Exempt Buildings and Extensions' later in the text), the installation of works and fittings such as new waste appliances, new drainage and heating appliances, alterations to the structure of a building, or work affecting means of escape in case of fire (including in some instances replacement windows in residential buildings) or changing the use of a building.

Building work does not cover repair items, but certain operations, which you may consider a repair, are not considered exempt under the regulations and therefore will require an application. Examples of this are underpinning and replacing a defective roof covering with a heavier or lighter tile or slate. From the 1st April 2002 replacements windows and doors have been required to comply with the regulations. However, different administrative procedures apply and you should ask for further information by contacting us, using any of the methods listed in the Introduction.

Should you have any doubts or even to double check your own conclusions please check with us, it may save you considerable problems in the future. It should be remembered that even if the work does not require approval under the Building Regulations - it may require approval under other legislation e.g. Planning Permission.

What do the regulations cover?

The regulations cover the greater majority of the constructional elements and details of the building:

- Structural stability
- Fire and means of escape
- Weather resistance
- Sound insulation
- Ventilation
- Sanitary conveniences and bathrooms
- Above and below ground drainage
- Heating appliances
- Stairways and ramps
- Conservation of fuel and power
- Facilities and access in and around buildings
- Safety glazing
- Domestic electrical work

As you can see even for the most straightforward of projects considerable detail is required. You will also note that 'utility supplies' i.e. gas, electricity and water supply are not included, these are subject to regulations applied by the supply companies.

How does the system work?

Firstly a valid application must be received prior to the commencement of any building work. This may take the form of a Building Notice or Full Plans application. Further details of both methods are given later in the booklet under 'Making a Building Regulation Application.'

Plans submitted under the Full Plans procedure are examined for compliance with the regulations and an approval is issued at the appropriate time. Under both methods the work is inspected at various stages again to ensure the requirements of the regulations are being met.

Fees are payable both at submission and inspection stage and again further details are to be found under 'Charges for Building Control Service' later in the text.

MAKING A BUILDING REGULATION APPLICATION

There are two methods of making an application under the Building Regulations, they are:

1. Full Plans Submission
- Or
2. Building Notice Procedure

It is important that the applicant is aware at an early stage of the differences between the methods and the problems that may be encountered.

Full Plans Submission

Requires the submission of full construction drawings, details and specification of the intended scheme prior to work commencing on site. A detailed appraisal of the proposals will be carried out by the Building Control Surveyor. You will be sent an appraisal letter which details items that require additional information, clarification or some other form of amendment. Once you have satisfactorily answered these queries a formal Notice of Approval will be issued which remains valid for three years from date of deposit. You are then safe in the knowledge that providing you and your builder constructs strictly in accordance with those plans and any conditions on the approval the regulations will be satisfied (it should be remembered, however, that the regulations do not cover everything).

Minor variations in construction can be agreed as work progresses, major changes may require amended details to be submitted (variations may need to be dealt with separately and differently under other legislation e.g. planning permission).

Building Notice Procedure

A Building Notice submission does not require the submission of plans with the Notice, other than in the case of the erection or extension of a building a block plan at a minimum scale of 1:1250 is required (see note on back of Building Notice Application form). The authority may, however, require details to be submitted during the construction process, if without them they are unable to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Once the Notice is received and providing the charge is correct you will be issued with a Building Notice Acceptance letter. You should note that this does not in anyway indicate prior approval of your proposals. Although, therefore, this process may appear advantageous it has disadvantages.

(1) You and/or your builder have no approved plans to work to. Whilst the inspecting officer will endeavour to anticipate problems, delays and costly remedial works may be necessary if the work carried out does not comply with the Building Regulations.

(2) You may find that without plans you and your builder have different ideas in respect of detail and general design issues outside of the Building Regulations. Enforcement of any 'contract' between you may prove difficult.

(3) The 'estimate' the builder gives you may prove inaccurate without the benefit of full design information.

INSPECTION PROCESS

Site inspections are carried out at a number of statutory and certain other stages, the use of the Building Notice procedure may require additional inspections. These are set out below with notes which may assist you or your builder.

- (1) Commencement
- (2) Foundation excavation
This inspection is to ensure that the ground upon which the building is to be founded is satisfactory. The Building Control Officer will consider various aspects during this inspection, including
 - (a) The load bearing capacity of the ground
 - (b) The proximity and depth of any drain runs and manholes
 - (c) Any indication of filled ground, generally or limited areas
 - (d) The depth of existing foundations
 - (e) Proximity of trees, or trees already removedIn ground with any clay content a minimum foundation depth of 900 - 1000mm is normally required.
- (3) Foundation concrete
There is little to be gained by just inspecting concrete in the ground. It is generally more useful for the blockwork to be built up to damp proof course level and the inspection carried out before backfilling. The position of the walling on the foundations can be checked and any special details inspected.
- (4) Oversite
The main points will be the suitability of any hardcore used, sand blinding to protect the damp proof membrane, the DPM itself is of the correct thickness and any joints are rolled or taped, sufficient DPM is left turned up the walls to tie in with DPC (new and existing), the floor insulation is laid with tight joints and turned up the edge of the slab.
- (5) DPC
The damp proof course will be checked to ensure suitability and width of material, laps at joints, lapped over existing DPC, clear of cavity internally. The DPC/cavity arrangements at the junction with the existing will also be checked. Any concrete fill within the cavity must finish at least 150mm below DPC level.
- (6) Laying of drains
A number of details including those listed below will be looked at on this inspection and the request should be submitted before the drains are backfilled.
 - (a) Suitability of material used
 - (b) Fall and line of drain
 - (c) Material used for bed and surround
 - (d) Access points
- (7) Floor joists
The size, grade and centre of joists will be checked together with bearings, lateral restraint straps and herringbone strutting.

- (8) Roof timbers
Again size, grade and centre of timbers together with bracing, lateral restraint and wall plate straps will be checked. It is advisable to request the inspection prior to felt and battens being applied.
- (9) Test on drains
An air or water test of all above and below ground drainage is required. It is helpful if the test can be set up and ready for the Building Control Surveyor when he calls.
- (10) Occupation
When a building is occupied before completion the Authority should be notified.
- (11) Completion (Statutory)
This is the inspection for which notification is most often forgotten. However, it is in your interest as many items can be checked at this stage, such as:
 - (a) Fire precautions and requirements (these can apply even in a small extension)
 - (b) Ventilation to rooms and roof voids
 - (c) Waste details
 - (d) Roof coverings and insulation
 - (e) Staircase details
 - (f) Safety glazing

Completion Certificate

The certificate will be issued on satisfactory completion of the work only if:

1. All the relevant statutory and non-statutory inspections have been notified and carried out, any remedial works completed and where necessary re-inspected and accepted as satisfactory. Your Building Control Surveyor will make it clear if a re-inspection is required.
2. Any additional inspections requested by the Building Control Surveyor during the period of construction are satisfactory.
When received, the Completion certificate should be lodged with the Approval Notice and Deeds of the property. In the event of your selling the property it will be requested by the purchaser's Solicitor. It is in your own interest, therefore, to ensure that you or your builder gives all the necessary notification for inspection.

EXEMPT BUILDINGS AND EXTENSIONS

Not all buildings and extensions require Building Regulation consent before being erected. The basic exemption rules are reasonably straightforward. However, there are a number of inferred or hidden issues which are not easily covered in this document. The list below should provide you with sufficient basic information but you are advised to contact the Building Control Service in all cases and discuss your specific proposals.

Exemptions:

1) A detached single storey building having an internal floor area which does not exceed 30m², which contains no sleeping accommodation and is a building:

- (a) no point of which is less than 1m from any boundary; or
- (b) which is constructed substantially of non-combustible material.

2) A detached building having an internal floor area which does not exceed 15m² and which contains no sleeping accommodation.

3) The extension of an existing building by the addition at ground level of:

- (a) a conservatory, porch, covered yard or covered way; or
- (b) a car port open on at least two sides

where the floor area of that extension does not exceed 30m², provided that in the case of a conservatory or porch which contains glazing, that glazing satisfies the requirements of Part N.

The various uses and their definitions will require further clarification according to specific circumstances. It is suggested therefore that having read the above you contact us for further discussion and confirmation of exemptions.

We will also be able to provide details of the requirements of Part N.

FEES FOR BUILDING REGULATION WORK

Charges are made to cover the cost of the building regulation part of the overall building control service. Details of the charges are indicated on a separate sheet included with this folder. The overall cost is the same whether a Full Plans Submission or the Building Notice Procedure is used, however, the charges are made in a different manner.

Full Plans Submission:

- a) attracts a plan charge to be paid when the application is deposited
- b) once the work has started and the first inspection carried out you will be invoiced for the inspection charge which covers all subsequent inspections.

Building Notice Procedure:

- a) the total of the plan charge and inspection fee is to be paid with the deposit of the building notice

A full plan submission or a building notice is not considered valid until the correct fee has been received.

Finally, please ensure that you have all the necessary permissions and approvals for the proposed work e.g. planning and listed building consent and that you have discharged your obligations under other legislation e.g. Party Wall Act.

If in doubt please ask, if we can't help, we will probably know a man who can!

OTHER BUILDING CONTROL FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

Dangerous Structures:

Investigating buildings and structures which are dangerous and instigating the appropriate action

Demolitions:

Anyone who wishes to demolish a structure must make an application under Section 80 of the Building Act 1984 to the Building Control department. The Act requires the person to notify the Building Control department of their intentions six weeks prior to commencing the work. Sections 81 and 82 of the Act require Building Control to respond with a schedule of requirements on how the work is to be undertaken. This is to prevent any danger to the public during demolition.

GETTING THE WORK DONE

With householders spending hundreds of millions of pounds on home improvements or repairs each year, the Office of Fair Trading has produced a guide to planning and managing work on your home entitled 'Home Improvements' in which they suggest steps to take in order to limit causes for complaint:

1. Make a plan of what you want done. Don't be pressured into unnecessary work or work you cannot afford. For large or complex jobs, professional advice may well be needed.
2. Get the necessary consents or agreements from your local authority and insurance company. Discuss your plans with your neighbours particularly if there are any issues covered by the Party Wall Act. A booklet is available from Building Control.
3. Seek at least three quotations based on detailed specification, and compare price, conditions, and reputation for reliability and good workmanship.
4. Get a written contract covering all the details of your agreement, notably the work to be done, price, start and completion dates, stage payments and retention periods and the position on delays where time is of the essence.
5. Find out whether a worthwhile guarantee is available, giving cover against a contractor ceasing to trade. Insurance backed schemes may be particularly appropriate.
6. Avoid deposits and advance payments. Use stage payments as a means of keeping the work progressing. Use any retained payment to ensure that defects discovered after completion are put right.
7. Be as clear as possible about the way you will deal with any disputes.
8. Make sure that you play fair with the builder. Pay bills for good work promptly. There is no sense in creating unnecessary problems and bad feeling. For advice and guidance if problems arise in the purchase of goods and services then telephone your trading standards.