



# COASTAL BUILDING APPROVAL SERVICE

*Commitment to Customer Satisfaction and Quality Service*

Phone: 07 4942 0266  
P.O. Box 5503  
MACKAY MC QLD 4741

Fax: 07 4942 0277  
admin@ccbldingapproval.com.au  
www.ccbldingapproval.com.au

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FACT  
SHEET

## A Guide for Building Work Applications . . .

This brochure is designed to assist you on how to prepare the required documentation for a **development application** so it can be assessed by *Coastal Building Approval Service* in a timely manner. We recommend close attention to the guide when preparing the necessary documentation for building work development applications. Poorly prepared applications missing essential information will experience delays or may not be accepted for assessment.

# ~ Retaining Walls ~

### WHEN IS A RETAINING WALL REQUIRED?

- If the contours of the natural ground are altered, then it is most likely some form of retaining structure will be necessary. Retaining Walls may be required during the construction of dwellings, swimming pools, subdivision of land, and erection of dividing fences and/or landscaping purposes.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO INSTALL AND/OR FOR A RETAINING WALL?

- As a 'rule of thumb' a property owner / person who changes the natural ground level by either excavating or filling is responsible for retaining any earth that they have altered from the natural ground level. This could be fill placed on top of the natural ground level or an excavation below the natural ground level.

CONSULTATION WITH ADJOINING PROPERTY OWNERS IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED WITH ANY PROPOSAL TO BUILD UP TO AN ADJOINING BOUNDARY. REMEMBER THAT YOUR NEIGHBOUR MAY ALSO BE INTENDING TO CUT/FILL UP TO THE SAME BOUNDARY. A SHARED WALL MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE.

### What Is Natural Ground?

- Natural ground is defined in the State Legislation as:  
*The ground level of the lot on the day the first plan of survey showing the allotment was registered.*

### What Should I Consider?

- Property boundaries and the final contours of adjoining properties;
- Underground services such as sewers, stormwater drains, water services, underground communications, power and gas etc; *Note: Underground services are not always located within easements.*
- Easements - Sometimes easements are designed and created to collect overland flows of stormwater;
- Approval from Mackay Regional Council will be required before carrying out excavation, filling, and building work within an easement, and/or in close proximity to sewer & stormwater mains;
- Drainage of sub-surface water from behind a retaining wall must discharge in such a way as to avoid creating nuisance to any neighbouring property;
- Whilst Retaining Walls are primarily designed to support soil, they may also be placed under stress from other factors such as buildings, swimming pools, landscape structures, footings, vehicle loads and/or wind loads on dividing fencing. Some pre-manufactured retaining walls are designed to support only soil and not other contributing stress factors.

## What Type Of Wall Should Be Used?

- There are a number of different types of retaining structures available, however you should choose one to suit your particular situation that will be structurally adequate to support the soils and applied loads being retained.

## Do I Need A Safety Barrier?

For any retaining wall exceeding 1.0m in height, it may be required and is certainly recommended that an approved safety barrier be installed at the higher level to prevent accidental injury. A barrier may comprise a fence of other approved method.

## Who Should Pay For The Wall?

It is not Coastal Building Approval Service's role to give advice on this matter. If in doubt, you should seek legal advice.

## When Do I Need A Building Development Approval? *(Building Regulation 2006, Schedule 1, Part 3)*

- All retaining walls placed under stress from factors such as buildings, swimming pools, landscape structures, footings, vehicle loads and/or wind loads on dividing fencing.
- All retaining walls greater than 1.0m in height above or below the level of natural ground require building development approval and an engineers structural design approved by a building certifier. This also applied to retaining walls less than 1.0m in height, when proposed to be built closer than 1.5m to another structure or building.
- All retaining walls closer than 1.5m to a building or another retaining wall.

## Do I Need An Engineer?

Generally, there are engineered designs for retaining structures available from the Concrete Masonry and Timber Industry associations. The construction of retaining walls using these designs will necessitate some building knowledge in order to select the appropriate design. The proposed use of alternate designs and/or materials will require design and certification by a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland. Your building certifier will need to consider the engineering design when assessing your building design development application.

## What Is Needed To Obtain A Building Approval?

### COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM 1

- Part A** - is required for all applications and gives the address and a description of the project.
- Part B** - is required for all building applications. It lists the materials to be used, the size and value of the project, and the builder's details.

### **SITE PLAN** - (1 COPY REQUIRED) (SCALED Minimum - A3 size)

The site plan as a general rule should be drawn to a scale of 1:200, and show the following information:

- (a) the property boundaries *(Can be obtained from the Registered Survey Plan available from the Department of Natural Resources, for a nominal fee)* ;
- (b) details and location of any easements on the property *(shown on the Survey Plan and/or from a deed title search)*;
- (c) the outline and description of any existing buildings, structures, pool (including pool fencing and pool pump), services and infrastructure, on the property;
- (d) distances from the outer most projection of the proposed building work to all boundaries, including proposed road frontage setbacks and any existing buildings, structures, services and infrastructure;
- (e) finished retaining wall(s) level(s), building pad levels, land surface levels and contour lines to AHD (Australian Height Datum) at ½ metre intervals and any cut and fill, including the method of support or protection proposed for any embankment;
- (f) design details and location of proposed storm water and surface water drainage system;
- (g) location and extent of any earthworks (excavation and filling).

*Note:* Photographs can provide a good record of important site features as well as existing and adjoining uses and street context.



**RPEQ ENGINEER'S STRUCTURAL PLANS, ETC** (SCALED Minimum - A3 size) or *Electronic Lodgement*

1. Footing and retaining wall(s) design details showing the sizes and relevant reinforcement design;
2. Structural Design - sufficient sections and details to show all structural members and their material type;
3. Timber framing schedule (if applicable) - details indicating member sizes and spacing;
4. Form 15 'Design Compliance Certificate' (Original and fully completed) - (signed by RPEQ Engineer).

**EARTH WORKS PLANS** (SCALED Minimum - A3 size) or *Electronic Lodgement*

Earthworks Plan indicating the extent of the proposed excavation and/or filling works. Construction details should be drawn to a larger scale (1:50) including and not limited to the following:

1. Building platforms with associated finished platform and floor levels;
2. Cut/fill batters;
3. Retaining walls - locations, heights and materials (where applicable);
4. Concrete masonry retaining wall details indicating reinforcement size and locations/spacing;
5. Details of any second hand material being used (if applicable);
6. Site works sections - minimum two sections required through the extent of the retaining wall(s) and/or cut/fill batters.

**GOOD PROCEDURES FOR DRAWINGS** (SCALED Minimum - A3 size)

In preparing the above supporting information and proposal report, the following guidance is provided:

**All drawings should** - (as required by the *Building Act 1975*);

- be produced at a recognised scale, e.g. 1:100 or 1:200;
- be dimensioned;
- contain a unique plan number (with a revision code for amendments);
- indicate the date produced;
- include the name and registration number of the person (including engineers) who prepared the plans;
- indicate north.

**AS CONSTRUCTED SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE PLAN**

This can be obtained from the Local Government / Council customer service for a fee.

**SOIL TEST REPORT (WHERE APPLICABLE)** - (1 COPY REQUIRED) or *Electronic Lodgement*

A soil investigation report (conducted by a certified person or company) must be provided with any building application for;

- a new swimming pool that incorporates a retaining wall or
- the pool is in the vicinity of the edge of a hill / slope etc or
- all retaining walls placed under stress from factors such as buildings, swimming pools, landscape structures, footings, vehicle loads and/or wind loads on dividing fencing.

**The soil test report must be addressed to the property owner and the assessment manager, clearly flagging that the report is for use and reliance by the assessment manager.**

**All reports should:**

- be dated;
- include a unique document number (with a revision code for amendments);
- indicate the name of the person who prepared the report;
- be reproduced at A4 size;
- be capable of black and white photocopying without affecting the clarity of graphics.

**TERMITE / PEST CONTROL (WHERE APPLICABLE)**

If the proposed building work contains materials susceptible to termite attack, a recognized form of termite control system will be required. A certificate (Form 15 'Design Compliance Certificate') from the termite barrier installer must be supplied to *Coastal Building Approval Service* upon completion of the treatment or installation.

**LICENSED BUILDER**

Where a licensed builder has been contracted to perform the building work and the project value is \$3,301 or over, the Building Services Authority (BSA) requires that insurance be paid on the project. Evidence in the form of the BSA 'Confirmation of Insurance' needs to be submitted to Coastal Building Approval Service prior to the issue of the building work development permit.

Building Services Authority has developed this information statement to clarify the licensing requirements regarding the construction of Retaining Walls. **To construct a stone, rock or boulder retaining wall, with a value in excess of \$1,100\* you must hold as a minimum, a licence in Bricklaying and Block laying regardless of whether the wall is dry or mortar jointed.** \* The value of building work includes all labour and materials associated with the work you are contracted to perform. Licensing Information Statement LIS-010 1st Introduced 18/5/04

**OWNER-BUILDER**

Property owners may perform building work up-to the value of \$11,000 (i.e. how much it would cost if a builder performed the work - labour and materials). An Owner-Builder permit, issued by the Building Services Authority (BSA), will be required for work valued at \$11,001 or over, and is to be provided to Coastal Building Approval Service at the time of lodgement of the application. For work valued over \$11,000 an Owner-Builder Course will be required. The permit must be for building work for domestic purposes only.

For further information, please contact the local Building Services Authority (BSA) office in the phone book.

**SEWERAGE MAINS**

It is desirable for buildings to be clear of sewerage mains. Building over a jump up connection or a sewer manhole is strictly prohibited. If your proposed building is on or near a sewer main (subject to approval by Mackay Water) you may be asked to:

- (a) make special provisions for the slab and footings over or adjacent to the sewer;
- (b) be responsible for the cost of movement of the structure should access to the sewer be necessary;
- (c) raise inspection openings in your house drainage to the finished floor level;
- (d) relocate the structure.

**TOWN PLANNING APPROVALS**

If your application does not comply with the Mackay Regional Council Planning Scheme(s), you will be required to obtain Town Planning Approval via the Material Change of Use (MCU) process.

These may include (but are not limited to):

- Boundary setbacks;
- Building work heights;
- Structure sizes, etc.

If there are any enquires in these matters, the Mackay Regional Council Duty Planner can be contacted via email at [dutyplanner@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:dutyplanner@mackay.qld.gov.au), or by arranging an appointment through the Mackay Regional Council Customer Service desks. 4968 4444. Alternatively, the Town Planning Scheme/Policy can be located on the Mackay City Council website: [www.mackay.qld.gov.au](http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au).

**FURTHER ASSISTANCE**

Coastal Building Approval Service is available to assist if you would like to discuss any matter relating to development applications.

You can obtain advice either by calling or meeting with us.

Disclaimer: This information sheet is produced by Coastal Building Approval Service in good faith and Coastal Building Approval Service accepts no responsibility for any ramifications or repercussions for providing this information.