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Types of Building Control Application

What types of building control applications are there?

The majority of Building Control applications we receive are either Full Plans applications or Building Notices. In both of the following cases the application must be made before works start. If the building is of a type covered under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (commercial and public buildings), you must submit a Full Plans application. Listed below are some advantages and disadvantages of each:

Full plans

Advantages of full plans:

- You know that as long as you carry-out the work in line with the approved plans it will meet the regulations
- Everyone involved knows in advance exactly what is required. There should be few nasty (or expensive!) surprises
- You can provide an approval notice to financial institutions, solicitors, and so on, when you are applying for loans or moving home
- As long as the work is carried out in line with the approved plans, and all the relevant inspections find the work is of a satisfactory standard, you get a completion certificate

Disadvantages of full plans:

- It is expensive to prepare detailed plans which include all the information necessary to carry out the work from the depth of the foundations to the height of the chimney
- You have to programme the work to allow enough time to prepare plans and for us to process them
- Once the plans have been submitted, it takes between 3-8 weeks for us to carry out the required checks and notify you, or your agent, as to whether, or not, they are satisfactory
- You may have an agent's fee to pay

Building notice

Advantages of a Building Notice:

You only have to submit an application form and the required charge

You save time and money by not having to prepare and submit detailed plans

You only have to prepare a site plan

Once the notice has been submitted, you only have to wait 48 hours before starting the work, so there are no long time delays involved in this type of application

Disadvantages of a Building Notice:

- You do not have an approved plan to work to. Although you may try to prepare for possible problems, if the work does not meet regulations, there may be a delay while the work is corrected
- You may not know that the work is incorrect until it is inspected
- Building estimates may not be accurate because full information about the design is not available
- All charges (plan and inspection) are paid at the time of deposit
- No approval notice
- Plans and calculations are often required to support your application
- All work must comply with the Building Regulations, without plans a detailed knowledge of the requirements is essential

For smaller work, and with the benefit of an experienced builder, Building Notice applications are often the obvious choice and the majority of work involved is carried out without problems. The Building Notice procedure deals with straightforward work, which should be carried out by people who understand the regulations. We cannot check the work before it is carried out and we do not issue a decision notice.

The regularisation certificate

This is a special type of application, and is used only where works have been carried out without consent. Where work has been carried out over 12 months ago, it is unlikely that we will take enforcement action. In these cases, although you may not face prosecution, you will find it extremely difficult to sell the property, as the purchasers' solicitor will almost certainly wish to see proof of Building Regulation Approval. Regularisation is only applicable to work carried out since 1984.

Disadvantages of regularisation applications:

- Charges are higher those for applications made at the right time
- You will almost certainly have to "open up" works, which is expensive, causes damage to decoration and, at the very least, is highly inconvenient
- Even where the work is found to comply with the Building Regulations, it takes around a week to obtain a Regularisation Certificate. Where problems are found, it can take considerably longer
- It is always more expensive to fix problems after the event than to avoid them in the first place