

# Building or Renovating?

## See your Council first!

### Do I need a Resource Consent?

Once you have an idea as to what renovations are planned, if they include additions to existing buildings, or new buildings such as a garage, it will be necessary to check your proposal against the rules in the Hutt City District Plan. This can be done by checking the District Plan yourself, which is available in all Council Libraries as well as on the Internet, or you can ask a Council Planning Officer. A Resource Consent will be required if any rules of the District Plan are not met.

Rules cover the following matters:

- how big your section needs to be
- how much of your section can be covered by buildings
- how many houses you can have on your property
- how close any building or retaining wall can be to your boundary
- what the maximum height allowed is
- how long a building can be in relation to your section boundary
- the number of carparks required
- the extent of earthworks allowed

If your additions or new buildings do not meet any one of the rules, then you will need to apply for a Resource Consent. If you do not obtain resource consent, where required to, you cannot proceed with your building works.

**How do I apply?** - Council has an "Application for Resource Consent Pack" available at the Regulatory Services Counter, which has an application form in it together with information telling you what is required. You can ask a Council Planning Officer for guidance. Your application should include the following:

- a description of the activity such as "additions to house for an additional bedroom" or "new garage"
- site plan showing all section boundaries, elevations of all new structures and floor plans (to appropriate scales)
- a copy of the certificate of title
- an Assessment of Environmental Effects. This does not need to be complicated - most often it will require that you consider the effect that your proposal will have on your neighbouring properties in relation to shading and loss of privacy.

**How is it processed?** - The application can be publicly notified. This takes considerable time and requires a planning hearing before a Council Hearings Committee, who will make a decision on the application. It can also be processed **non-notified**, where the decision is made by a Council Planning Officer with delegated authority. Most applications for renovations are likely to be non-notified. The Council Planning Officer needs to be satisfied that any environmental effects are minor and that written approval of all affected neighbours has been obtained. This means that it is a good idea to discuss your renovations with your neighbours at an early stage.

**What happens next?** - If the application is approved you will receive a letter from Council telling you the reasons why Council has approved your application. This letter will include conditions of approval. You should consider any conditions of your approval and if you think that they might cause any difficulties, contact the Council Planning Officer to discuss it. Obviously you cannot start your project until the Council has approved your **Building Consent** as well. **Your resource consent is valid for five years.** Your building work must be the same as the plans approved for resource consent. You may do less work than that approved for resource consent, for example approval may have been given for additions and a garage, and you may decide to proceed only with the house additions. If the application is declined, the Council Planning Officer can advise you of your appeal rights.

### Do I need a Building Consent?

Your local Council is the first place to go when you're thinking about building or renovating at home. We know and understand the laws that tell you what you can build. It's our job to give you the advice you need to get you on your way. There are many rules you need to know about so before you start, see us first - we're here to help you.

**Renovating** - When you change the look of your home without changing its layout or size, that's renovating. Some examples are putting new Gib board on your walls, converting your garage into a rumpus room or changing your wooden windows to aluminium ones. Not all renovations need building consent, but some do. To be sure, check with us before you start work.

**Additions and Alterations** - This is when you change the shape of your house or make it bigger. If you build a conservatory or an extra room, that's an addition and you may need to get a building consent before you start work. If you want to change your house by moving a wall, putting a room in your attic or replacing your woodburner then that's an alteration and you will probably need a building consent. See us first - we'll be able to help you get things started.

**Remodelling a kitchen or bathroom** - If you want to move your kitchen sink, change your bath for a shower, or put in a dishwasher for the first time, you will need to move pipes. And if that's what you're planning, you may need a building consent. However, if you're replacing your kitchen cupboards or putting in a new toilet where the old one was you probably won't need a consent. See us first - we're here to help you.

**Decks and landscaping** - Just because you're building outside or away from your house doesn't mean you can ignore building rules. If you build a deck that is more than 1 metre off the ground, you'll need a building consent. Even if your deck is not that high, but someone could fall more than a metre off it you also need a building consent. You may also need a consent if you want to build a retaining wall that's over 1.5m high. There are rules about building pergolas and gazebos as well. We have all the answers to your outdoor questions so see us before you get started.

**Swimming Pools and Spa Pools** - If your pool is deeper than 400mm then you need to put a fence around it. This is law under the Fencing and Swimming Pool Act 1987 and it applies no matter when your pool was installed. And it's not just swimming pools that need a fence around them - you also need to put a fence around water features and spa pools, if they're deep enough. We can give you information about when to fence and what type of fence you should use.

### What happens if I don't obtain a Building Consent?

If you go ahead with building work and haven't obtained a building consent first, you could have problems later on. Other people can complain to the Council about the work you've done. If we find it has been done without consent we can ask you to fix the work or remove it altogether. You may not be covered in your insurance policy if work done without a building consent is damaged or destroyed. And if you go to sell your house, potential buyers often check with us to make sure we gave you a consent for any alterations. House sales can fall through if buyers discover building work has been done without the Council's approval.

**These rules are here for the health, safety and wellbeing of our whole community**

You can contact us by phone: (04) 570 6666, email: [contact@huttcity.govt.nz](mailto:contact@huttcity.govt.nz) or internet: [www.huttcity.info](http://www.huttcity.info)

