

Watch those design drawings

Design deficiencies

We continue to experience problems with design drawings which do not meet the minimum requirements for plan processing.

Standard of documentation

Section 7 of the Building Act defines 'plans and specifications' as the drawings, specifications and other documents according to which a building is to be constructed, altered, demolished or removed. Documentation is required to be of a high, professional standard. Refer to the Department of Building and Housing publication "Guide to applying for a building consent". For a copy visit www.dbh.govt.nz

Some designers are trying to squeeze too much information onto drawings to save printing costs. This is false economy as it becomes difficult not only for council staff to process and inspect the work but also for contractors trying to read and decipher the drawings. Best practice is to keep plans clean and simple, with good detail.

The following items should be clearly notated on the plans:

- Title e.g. Site plan
- Designer's name
- Owner's name
- Address of the job
- Drawing number e.g. A01
- Revision number e.g. Revision A
- The date drawings were released for consent

Drawings must be

- Produced to scale on white A3, A2 or A1 paper
- Minimum font size of 10 or if CAD 2.5
- Produced in black ink only (no coloured or freehand drawings)

Specifications must be project specific and include relevant supporting documentation (installation details).

Amendments and revisions

When an amendment or revision is being made to a set of plans it is important that everyone knows what the revision or amendment is about. Receiving and processing these changes should be a simple process, providing a clear paper trail documenting the change.

In addition to the items noted above, amendments and revisions must include the following information:

- Drawing number e.g. A01
- Revision number e.g. Revision B
- The date that the plan was changed e.g. 1 May 2015
- Cloud or similar to indicate the changes

Benefits

The benefits of properly documenting changes include:

- Date timeline of revisions is clear

- More efficient processing / reduced costs
- Easier and quicker reference to revisions
- Prevents other unauthorised changes being slipped into documentation or items being missed
- Puts the onus on the designer to clearly show what is intended

Amendments

During the course of construction for whatever reason an applicant may choose to amend the building consent by changing a building method or product. These changes are dealt with via a formal amendment to the building consent. The designer should provide an accurate description of the proposed change.

For example:

Slab on grade amended to raft floor design.

Revisions

Revisions generally come about as a result of a request for further information (RFI) during the consent processing stage i.e. before the building consent is approved. If the processing officer has raised an RFI, providing a written response to the questions will ensure the processing officer can complete the task more efficiently.

For example:

RFI: The floor joists under the dining room are outside the scope of NZS3604; please provide engineers calculations or increase the size of the joists to accommodate the span.

RESPONSE: The floor joists have been increased from 200 x 50 to 250 x 50 and now meet the requirements of NZS3604

Producer statements

If the amendment or revision results in changes to engineer designed plans, which are supported by a producer statement; the revised plans must be reviewed and signed by the producer statement author and the producer statement updated accordingly.

Certificates of Work (CoW)

If the amendment affects restricted building work an updated CoW is required identifying the changes to the plans.