

Retaining Walls Information Sheet

WHAT IS A RETAINING WALL

A retaining wall is a structure designed and constructed to support any material, usually soil, where the natural ground level has been altered by cutting (lowering) or filling (raising).

A fence should not be used to retain soil unless it has been specifically designed to do so.

WHEN IS APPROVAL REQUIRED?

All retaining walls more than 500mm in height require a building permit prior to construction.

Retaining walls less than 500mm in height may also require a permit where they:

- a) encroach beyond the boundary of the works land;
- b) adversely affect the adjoining lots by reducing the bearing capacity of the land;
- c) might damage or reduce the structural adequacy of a building or structure on the land; or
- d) change the natural site drainage in a way that reduces the effectiveness of the drainage of the land or existing or future buildings on the land.

Where either an encroachment is to occur or a retaining wall will adversely affect the adjoining lot, permission from all of the adjoining land owners is required prior to applying for a building permit from the City.

Note: Where the retaining wall is greater than 500mm high an application for Development Approval (planning consent) may also be required. Please check before you apply for your building permit.

WHEN ARE NEIGHBOURS COMMENTS REQUIRED?

Should the proposed building work adversely affect adjoining land the applicant may be required to submit a *BA20 Notice for Consent to Encroach or Adversely Affect Form*, and/or a *BA20A Notice and Request for Consent (Response Notice): Protection Structures, Party walls, Removal of Fences, Access to Land Form*.

These forms and an information guide "*Work Affecting Other Land*" can be obtained from the Building Commission website – www.buildingcommission.wa.gov.au.

APPLYING FOR A BUILDING PERMIT

To obtain a Building Permit, applicants must submit to the City's Building Services Team:

- a) An application for a Building Permit. The application can be "Uncertified" or "Certified";
- b) A copy of the construction details certified by a Practising Structural Engineer;
- c) A site plan at a minimum scale of 1:200 showing the location of the proposed retaining wall(s). The site plan should clearly show a datum point, existing ground levels and proposed ground levels; and
- d) A sub-soil drainage detail.

Retaining walls, including footings and sub-soil drainage, are generally required to be constructed wholly within the subject lot and not encroach beyond the boundary as issues relating to maintenance and ownership may result. However the Building Act 2011 allows some encroachments in some circumstances.

NOTE: Timber materials are not permitted on a property boundary.