

Building Information Sheet: Retaining Walls

Definition

A retaining wall is a wall that retains soils or other loads and must be installed or provided where natural ground levels have been altered in such a way that it results in a difference in ground levels. This can affect the common boundary between two properties.

The National Construction Code (NCC) classifies retaining walls as being of Class 10b.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a Building Permit required for a retaining wall?

The Building Commission of WA has determined that Building Permits are not required where the risk of non-compliance with the building standards is low, however; a Building Permit is required for all retaining walls that are not otherwise exempted. Item 6 in Schedule 4 (cl.2) of the Building Regulation 2012 states that the construction, erection, assembly or replacement of a retaining wall that retains ground no more than 500mm in height and is not associated with any other building work (i.e. any retaining walls along boundaries will require a building permit regardless of height) or with the protection of other land adjoining the land on which the retaining wall is located, does not require a Building Permit.

If you are not sure whether a permit is required you should check with the City's Building Services Department.

The City's Engineering Services Department should also be consulted prior to commencing any works to ensure that the works do not affect any existing drainage easements.

It should also be noted that; where a Building Permit is not required, the building or incidental structures must still comply with the building standards, local laws and planning policies that apply during the period of construction. If it is anticipated that standards may change during the construction period the owner can apply for a Building Permit to fix the standards to the date of application.

Who submits the application?

Either the property owner or the Builder/Agent can submit the application.

Can I construct a retaining wall as an owner builder?

Yes, owner builders are permitted to construct retaining walls. However, you will be required to obtain engineer's certified details for the construction of the retaining wall.

How long will my application take to process?

- Certified Applications – The City must process a certified application within 10 working days of it being lodged.
- Uncertified Applications – The City must process an uncertified application within 25 working days from being lodged. If additional information is required the applicant will be given 21 calendar days to provide the information. The City then has a further 25 working days in which to provide a determination.

What plans and specifications do I need to submit with an uncertified application for a Building Permit?

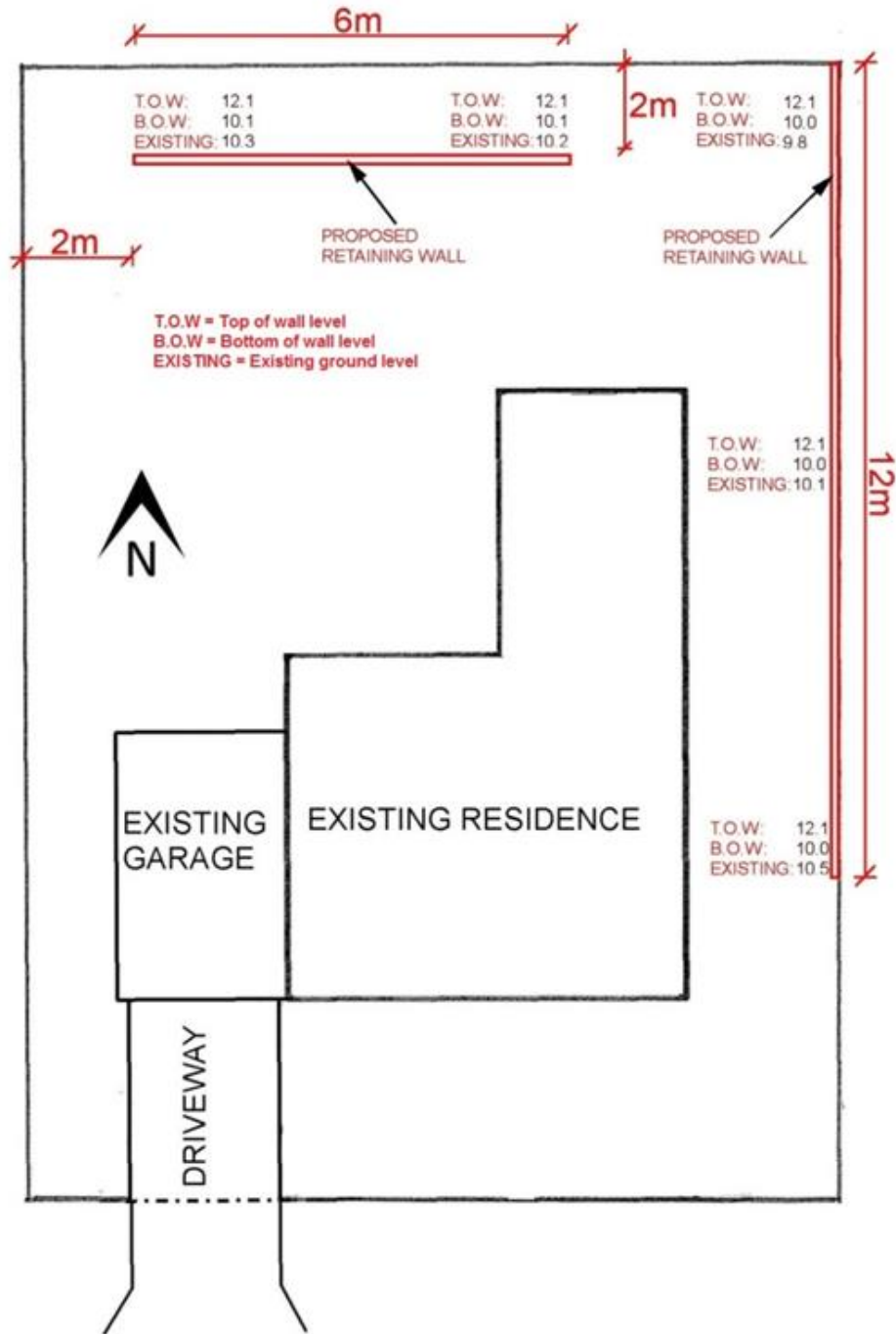
Along with a completed Application for Building Permit-Uncertified (Form BA2), two copies of the following plans and details are required:

- A full site plan showing the location of the retaining wall(s) in relation to the property boundaries and existing buildings on the property. Intermittent existing and proposed spot levels at top and bottom of retaining wall(s). This site plan is to be drawn to a minimum scale of 1:200.
- Elevations of the proposed retaining wall(s) to a scale of not less than 1:100.
- Cross sections and construction details that nominate the materials to be used including their dimensions and fixing methods.
- A BA20 form is required to be signed by the affected neighbours where access to adjoining land is required or cut is proposed and will adversely affect the adjoining land.
- Where the removal of diving fences is required, a BA20A form is required to be signed by the affected neighbours.
- Where fill greater than 500mm above ground level is proposed, an application for Development Approval is required to be submitted.
- Structural certification of the design will also be required in most circumstances and advice should be sought from the City's Building Services Department prior to submission.

What are the fees for a permit application?

For application fees please refer to the "building fees schedule" on the City's website.

TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF A SITE PLAN TO BE SUBMITTED WITH AN APPLICATION



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