# THE PLANNING PERMIT PROCESS EXPLAINED

(STAGE 1)

\*Please note this process may vary slightly according to each individual application

#### Site assessment & Detailed Investigation

After meeting with you to discuss your requirements & design brief, we will then undertake a more detailed site investigation before any design work is commenced. This can include a dial before you dig enquiry, title/covenant search, site measure and features & levels survey (Completed by a *Licensed Land Surveyor*). In some cases, we may also recommend that an *Arborist* be engaged to provide a tree report detailing the condition, size, location and species of significant trees on and around the site.

#### **Preliminary Design**

Once we have more detailed information, the preliminary design work/schematic plans are commenced. After completion of the initial design, we will contact you to discuss the plans and any fine-tuning that you may require.

#### \*Pre Application with Council (Optional)

Once we have a schematic plan prepared, there is an opportunity to meet with a Town Planner to discuss the proposal and any preliminary concerns that Council may have. This is not a requirement but is recommended for larger and more complex or potentially controversial projects. *Please note*: Unfortunately, not all Council's offer a pre-application service. Those that do generally charge a small fee for the pre-application which in most cases will be deducted from the full application fee upon formal lodgement for planning permit.

### **Preparation of Plans for lodgement**

Upon completion of the schematic plan that is to your approval, (Including taking into account any pre-application comments - if applicable) more detailed plans are completed in preparation for lodgement to Council. This can include a neighbourhood site description, design response plan, elevations, shadow diagrams, overlooking diagrams, photo montages and a comprehensive planning report.

If Council is satisfied with the application and no further information is deemed to be required, the application will progress straight to advertising.

## **Preliminary Assessment**

After the plans are lodged, Council will generally respond in around 1-2 weeks advising of their receipt of the application and which Town Planner the application has been allocated to. During this time, the Town Planner will make a preliminary assessment of the application and may send a request for further information (Also known as a section 54)

This usually occurs within 4 to 6 weeks from the date of the allocation letter.

If Council is satisfied that the application will not have a negative impact or material detriment to any person, and no further information is deemed to be required, the application will not need to be advertised and a decision will be made.

## Further Information Request (Section 54)

A letter is received from Council listing items that need to be addressed. This may include additional information or clarification or a specific request for changes to the plans. Council may also outline their concerns (If any) and make comments based on their assessment of the proposal against the planning scheme. We will discuss these with you and make a recommendation on how we can respond before making changes to the plans and returning any documentation back to Council.

## Advertising

Letters are sent to surrounding neighbours advising them of the proposal. A sign is usually required which will need to be erected and located in full view on the site for a period of 14 days. Prior to advertising commencing, a fee is payable to cover Council advertising cost, materials & administration costs. We will contact Council at the completion of the advertising period to determine if there have been any objections to the application.

# Assessment (The decision)

 $Council\ will\ now\ make\ a\ more\ detailed\ assessment\ of\ the\ application\ and\ in\ doing\ so\ will:$ 

- Take objections into consideration
- Hold a mediation meeting if needed (Generally when 10 or more objections are received)
   Refer to comments/advice from other internal departments such as Engineering or Environment, or external agencies such as VicRoads or Water Authorities
  - Negotiate with the applicant
  - Prepare the final planning report

## Refusal

Council may refuse the application for a permit and issue a Refusal notice. The grounds for refusal will be listed on the notice. You have 60 days from the date of the refusal to apply to VCAT for a review of the decision.

# Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit (N.O.D)

If Council decides to issue a permit, and there were objections, then Council will issue a 'Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit' (N.O.D). The notice signals Council's decision to grant the permit and identifies conditions that will be included on the permit. Both the applicant and objectors are sent a copy of this notice. Objectors have 21 days from the date of the notice to appeal the decision at VCAT. If there are no appeals within the 21 days, Council will then issue the planning permit.

## Permit (With Conditions)

When a permit is granted, it may include specific conditions requiring changes to be made to the plans before an endorsed/stamped set can be issued.

There may also be a condition to provide other documentation such as Landscape or Drainage plans which will also need to be assessed by Council before being endorsed.



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