



BUILDING LOCATION CERTIFICATE GUIDANCE

Every building consent for a new structure needs to have the location and finished floor level confirmed. How confirmation is achieved will vary depending on the complexity of work, location, planning rules and the methods available to confirm the location.

A building location certificate, also known as a siting certificate, will be required for most building consents. You can find the Dunedin City Council template form at www.dunedin.govt.nz/building-services-forms.

Please note, if using a different template please make sure all the information required in the DCC template is included.

To discuss any of the information contained in this guidance contact Building Services on 03 477 4000 or email building@dcc.govt.nz.

Know your boundaries

Certain properties have record of title with boundary locations that may not be well defined. Common examples are:

- Properties that are 'Limited as to Parcels' (this is marked on the property record of title just below the main heading).
- Properties that have a legal description which includes a 'Section' or 'Part Section'.
- Properties that have a legal description which includes a 'Lot' with a suffix number less than 10000 (e.g. Lot 3 DP 8509).

Should you wish to carry out building work on such a property, it is recommended that you seek advice from a licensed cadastral surveyor (specialists in establishing real property boundaries). Building without a qualified determination of boundary alignments may result in considerable risk for the property owner.

DCC site inspectors will not allow work to proceed unless a building location certificate confirms the location is within tolerance or the discrepancy is approved by way of an amendment to the building consent.

Pre-pour inspections

Pre-pour inspections by a DCC site inspector or a structural engineer are required if specified in the record of required site inspections issued with the building consent. The DCC will not accept pre-pour inspection bookings unless it is confirmed that any building location certificates required will be available at the time of the inspection.

Work that may not require a building location certificate

- Accessory buildings where the set-out dimensions relate to existing structures or features that are easily and accurately identified. (Note: this situation will not apply if the building work is close to a poorly defined boundary).
- Alterations and extensions will generally not require surveyor confirmation; however, confirmation may still be required at the discretion of either the DCC building consent processor or site inspector. Factors influencing this decision include the scale and complexity of the work, steepness of the site and proximity of the extension to boundaries, setback lines, easements, drainage structures and the ability to identify boundaries.
- Some new farm buildings - where the set-out distances to boundaries are large and a small set-out discrepancy will have no effect on the completed building or neighbours. To be exempt from requiring a building location certificate, the proposed building work would need to meet the following criteria:
 - Be in a rural zone
 - 20m or more from any property boundary
 - 10m or more from any easement boundary
 - At least 5.0m inside any yard setbacks or recession planes specified under the district plan or 2GP
 - Not subject to any height plane restrictions or side or front yard restrictions of the District Plan/2GP (see rule 16.6.10)
 - Have set out dimensions on the site plan provided in such a way that location can be easily confirmed by site inspectors
 - Must be in general accordance with any resource consent requirements.

Information required with building consent applications

- Refer to the appropriate application checklist to determine what information needs to be included in the building consent application. Get one at www.dunedin.govt.nz/building-services-forms.
- Heights may be shown referencing either the Otago Metric Datum (OMD) or NZ Vertical Datum 2016. You must specify which system is being used.
- In some circumstances a finished floor level based on a local reference point, such as the crown of the road, will be acceptable. This information must be clearly set out on the building consent application.
- Building consent application instructions require applicants to provide a site plan showing a range of information including distances to boundaries, easements, contours/or ground levels, proposed floor heights and the extent of cut and fill. We strongly advise that a topographical survey be undertaken so that information provided for building consent is accurate and achievable. If assumed site information does not match actual site information, delays and additional costs often result. An example would be a building breaching a height plane restriction, even though the plans don't indicate this. Work would have to be halted while resource consent and an amendment to the building consent are obtained.

Key information for designers

- The designer plays the greatest role in providing site and set out information to the DCC on behalf of the owner. The more complex the design is, the greater the risk involved with keeping the dimensions within the District Plan and Building Act restraints.
- We strongly advise that a topographical survey be undertaken so that information provided for building consent is accurate and achievable.
- The designer will need to propose how site location is to be verified by way of one or more building location certificates. Examples include:
 - There is a location, floor level, boundary set back or a recession plane that needs to be checked within a single build under a single building location certificate
 - There are several structures proposed to be constructed and verified at different stages as part of a single building consent
 - There are different levels for one structure such as for commercial buildings or complex hill sites to be verified at different stages.

Key information for surveyors

- The surveyor's primary role is to confirm that the buildings location, finished floor level and height are in accordance with the building consent.
- Surveyor confirmation will be required at the foundation construction/boxing stage and must be confirmed by a building location certificate that the construction location and height is within 3cm of the approved building consent documents prior to concrete pour (where this can be achieved in terms of survey accuracy). Failure to meet this tolerance will result in the project being halted while an amendment to the building consent is obtained.
- You may be asked to provide a building location certificate for one or more specific stages that the designer or DCC have requested to be verified. A certificate needs to be filled out for each stage as per the instructions on the form. Please note, if the building consent has had any amendments or minor variations, the latest copy of the approved plan is to be used.
- The building location certificate has a section to declare any deviations from the approved consented dimensions. In this situation, the surveyor needs to clearly record the consented dimensions as well as the dimensions that are not in accordance with the building consent on a copy of the approved consent plan, preferably in centimetres. If they are not in accordance with the consent, the surveyor must advise the owner/builder that an amendment to the building consent is likely to be required and that the owner/builder should confirm this with DCC Building Services.
- If specifically required by DCC as part of the building consent, the building location certificate should also confirm if any recession planes will be breached and if so, by how much. Note, this confirmation would normally take place at construction/boxing stage, with the outcome being subject to the building being built according to the approved above-floor-level design. To reliably confirm compliance with recession planes, the surveyor may need to measure ground levels along the property boundary lines (if the surveyor cannot rely on the ground level information used for the design).

Key information for homeowners

- This document is intended to provide guidance for various professions. If you require clarification on any of the terms used in this guidance please seek advice from your building professional.
- The homeowner is legally responsible for the building consent and all building work on their land and should remain aware of what is happening with their building process.
- We strongly advise that a topographical survey be undertaken so that information provided for building consent is accurate and achievable.
- The easiest way to identify whether a building location certificate will be required during the build is to check your issued building consent documentation and the 'Record of required site inspections'. Remember to talk to your designer or builder if you have any concerns.
- If a building location certificate is required, the builder may ask you to engage a surveyor at foundation construction/boxing stage. Once the certificate has been produced by the surveyor it is important that the surveyor explains any deviations they have found with you. If everything is ok, an inspector will need to review the certificate on site at the next inspection, so it is important a copy is kept on site.
- Construction location and height will be required to be within 3cm of the approved building consent documents, where this can be achieved in terms of survey accuracy.

If the surveyor finds any deviations from the consented plans that are outside of set tolerances, an amendment will be required to the building consent, and or a resource consent, which will require revised plans to be submitted for approval and payment of any applicable fees.

Key information for builders

- Construct the building as per the approved (stamped) consented plans.
- Review the consent documentation and 'Record of required site inspections' and make sure that the stages that have been listed by the DCC processing officer are looked at by a surveyor and a building location certificate is provided for each stage.
- A DCC site inspector can also request a building location certificate if they are unable to verify location. Hedges, fences, other buildings or datums of unknown accuracy are unlikely to be adequate. The inspector will be clear in their instructions about what needs verification and about what if any, building work may continue while waiting for the certificate.
- Surveyor confirmation will be required at foundation construction/boxing stage and must confirm by a building location certificate that the construction location and height is within 3cm of the approved building consent documents prior to concrete pour (where this can be achieved in terms of survey accuracy). Failure to meet this tolerance will result in the project being halted while an amendment to the building consent obtained.
- Once the building location certificate has been produced by the surveyor it is important that the surveyor explains any deviations they have found (to the builder). If everything is ok the DCC site inspector will review the certificate on site at the next inspection, so it is important a copy is kept on site.
- If the surveyor finds any deviations from the approved plans in their building location certificate, an amendment will be required to the building consent and/or a resource consent, which will require revised plans to be submitted for approval and payment of any applicable fees.