OUTBUILDINGS - CONVERTING A SHED FOR HABITABLE PURPOSES INFORMATION SHEET

IIMPORTANT LINKS

Local Planning Scheme No. 4

State Planning Policy (SPP 3.7) - Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas

FPA Australia - Accredited Bushfire Practitioner

DEFINITION OF "OUTBUILDING"

An outbuilding is defined under the Residential Design Codes of WA as "an enclosed non-haibtable structure that is detached from any dwelling"

CAN I LIVE IN AN OUTBUILDING?

No. The National Construction Code - Building Code of Australia (BCA) classifies outbuildings (sheds) as Class 10a 'non-habitable' structures not appropriate for human habitation or living purposes. any building or structure intended for habitable purposes (i.e. living, sleeping) must satisfy the BCA performance requirements for a class 1a 'habitable' structure.

Class 1a 'habitable' structures require a higher standard of construction due to considerations relating to safety and amenity.

CAN I BUILD OR CONVERT AN EXISTING OUTBUILDING TO USE AS A DWELLING?

Proposals to build or convert an 'outbuilding' for habitable purposes may be considered by the Shire, however, all relevant development (planning) considerations and minimum construction standards under the BCA must be achieved.

CAN I BUILD OR CONVERT AN EXISTING OUTBUILDING TO USE AS A DWELLING?

If the proposed location of the outbuilding to be converted for habitable purposes is located within a Bushfire Prone Area, additional requirements may apply. In accordance with State Planning Policy 3.7, a Bushfire Attack Level Assessment is required to be prepared by an Accredited Bushfire Practitioner and submitted with the development application.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

BUILDING

To convert an existing outbuilding, the lodgement of a Building Permit is required to 'Change the Class' of a Class 10a outbuilding to a Class 1a dwelling. This requires lawful conversion of an outbuilding to ensure compliance with all applicable development, building and other relevant standards.

To build or convert an outbuilding, the Building Permit must demonstrate compliance with performance requirements and minimum construction standards in accordance with the BCA, for example:

Applicants for building permits must submit one set of plans either electronically or in paper and will generally include:

- A site plan at a minimum scale of 1:200 showing the distance the proposed structure will be setback from the lot boundaries and all other buildings on the property (including pools and retaining walls).
- A contour survey plan clearly showing existing ground levels on the property, verge/street levels, and proposed finished floor, driveway, paving and ground levels.

- Footing and slab details. Note: a waterproof barrier is to be installed under the concrete floor.
- A floor plan, section and elevations at a minimum scale of 1:100 showing all dimensions. Include clear dimensions of walls, rooms, windows & doors, and existing adjoining rooms.
- Construction details showing materials to be used and their respective sizes, spans and spacing.
- Location of all smoke detectors as required by the Building Code of Australia.
- Details showing the dwelling's compliance with the energy efficiency provisions of the BCA. (eg: energy rating certification from an Energy Efficiency Assessor).
- If submitting a "certified" application, a copy of the Certificate of Design Compliance issued by your Building Surveying Contractor including all reference documents.

Note: other specific information may be required following assessment of your plans by the Building Surveyor.

ROOM CONVERSIONS:

There are a number of significant issues that you need to consider if you wish to change the use of a non-habitable room to a habitable room including (but not limited to) the following:

- A carport/ garage may be converted to a habitable room if there is sufficient space elsewhere on the lot to provide adequate parking space.
- The level of the new floor may be required to match the level of the existing floor level of the residence.
- A complying termite barrier is to be installed under the concrete floor and around the perimeter.
- Moisture must be prevented from entering the room. This includes rising damp between the ground and the floor slab, and preventing moisture through walls and a roof. Cavity wall construction is generally required and can be double brick, brick veneer, timber or steel stud wall lined externally and internally.
- A complying ceiling is to be installed under the roof cover with a minimum ceiling height of 2.4 metres above the finished floor to be achieved.
- Toilet, laundry and bathroom windows that open into the new room are to be sealed and mechanical ventilation systems (exhaust fans) installed.
- Compliance with the energy efficiency provisions of the BCA will be required. Details demonstrating compliance will be required. It is recommended that you consult with your draftsperson or an Energy Assessor regarding this.

WHAT FEES NEED TO BE PAID?

Refer to scheduled fee information for the amount to be paid on submission.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Depending on the location of the development and existing approvals, an environmental health approval and/or registration may be required to assess the suitability of septic systems and potable water supply.

Please contact the Shire's Environments Health Officer on 9756 1018 for specific health requirements.