

PROCESS

STAGE 1 – INFO GATHERING PHASE

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We run the site through “Charlie” (aka our automated site information tool), to gather the relevant site information. From there, we provide you with a rundown of the potential “issues” jumping out at us. Together with a summary of the options available (aka pathways forward), for you to consider – Allow 1-2 business days.

Once received, we review the proposal plans (be it sketches or full drawings) ... and provide further feedback on the potential “issues” and options available – Allow 1-2 business days.

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3 If a DA path is chosen, we provide a quote for consideration – Allow 1 business day.

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STAGE 2 – APPLICATION LODGEMENT PHASE

Once our online quote is accepted, the automation magic is triggered behind the scenes. If signed “owners consent” is required, you will receive an automated email with a link to a form for such – Instantly.

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We then start drafting the application up – Allow 1 week for this drafting process to occur, unless we have previously agreed to bump it up the line for any reason.

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Once the first draft is complete, we come back to you as the client and/or designer, with any recommended tweaks and/or changes. These tweaks and/or changes are normally minor notations, or things that we think will make the plans more "Council friendly". Aka easier for Council to understand, and/or that highlight the compliance of the proposal. This is done to help make things move through quicker. I.e. to get you a quicker approval.

Once we have the updated/final plans back, we finalise and lodge the application – Allow 1-2 business days.

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STAGE 3 – COUNCIL REVIEW PHASE

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Council's DA lodgments (aka admin) team then check and upload all the docs into their system, before they issue a formal fee quote (which is sent via email). We will forward the quote directly onto the client for payment as soon as it is received – Allow 3 business days for Council to do their thing (outside of peak periods like Christmas).

Once Council receives payment at their end, they allocate the application to an assessment team. This includes an Assessment Manager (the AM, aka the Town Planner who is responsible for coordinating everything), and any relevant specialists (like an Architect, Engineer etc.).

The team carries out their own individual assessment, before feeding their comments back to the AM.

If there are no outstanding concerns/questions, the AM will jump to step 13 in this process. If any party on Council's side requires changes or additional information, the AM will issue a combined 'Information Request' (aka IR) or 'Further Issues' – Allow 4 weeks as a guide (add 2 weeks for a complex or non standard application).

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Once we receive the IR, we review it ... and then jump on the phone to the AM to get the “unofficial rundown”. Noting that the formal letter is always a more hardline / over the top scary version of what Council is thinking. As it is available for public viewing – Allow 1-2 business days for us to catch the AM.

Once we have the unofficial/real run down of what is required, we will normally come back to you with three options. Options that include giving Council everything they have asked for, accommodating some of their requests, or pushing back on all of Council's requests.

The option chosen will depend on the specifics of the job.


That being said, you normally only go with option 1 (give everything) when the requests are minor/inconsequential and where time is the number 1 driver.

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Option 3 is normally not recommended. As it will almost certainly result in a refusal.

Therefore, by default, option 2 is normally the option chosen. Keeping in mind that often the tweaks required will have minimal impact on the end result for you.

Once the chosen path is locked in, we work with you to get any tweaks made to the plans/additional info gathered for our response – Time depends on external factors like Designer/Architect's workload.



STAGE 4 – COUNCIL NEGOTIATION PHASE

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Once we have the updated plans/additional information, we submit it to Council for review - We normally aim to do this within 2 business days.

Steps 9 to 12 are then repeated as needed, until all parties agree on the outcome - Timeframe depends on the nature of the design, how hard you wish to fight for particular aspects.

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Once the AM has given us the verbal approval, they will then prepare their "recommendation" to the Delegate. That is, they will prepare the approval documents, and present them to the Delegate. The Delegate being the Senior Planner, the person who is responsible for officially signing off on the decision on behalf of Council.

The Delegate is normally involved in the process along the way at a high level and hence, 99% of the time, they simply sign off on the documents. Occasionally, they will raise additional questions /concerns based on their advanced level of experience. Which may require additional tweaks – Allow 2-5 business days outside of peak periods.

Once formally approved, the documents are processed by the admin team and issued to us via email. We then forward them on to the client with additional information outlining the next steps required, now that the DA is complete – Same day as receipt.

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STAGE 5 – POST DA PHASE

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The first step given by us will always be to review the approval documents in detail, specifically the conditions of approval. To make sure that you understand exactly what Council has required. Noting that there is a small window within which we can lodge a negotiated decision, aka a request to change conditions etc. with Council. If you are happy with the conditions, the next step is to celebrate (#PopTheChampers). Then take the approval documentation back to your Designer/Architect, so that they can commence the detailed drawings phase.

As a reminder, DA's for reno's are typically valid for 2 years. Extensions can be applied for, but cost mulah and are not guaranteed.

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