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Your heads up to Building and Planning

June 2015



Service helps with approval process



Karleen Edwards

From 1 July 2015, the Council is offering a service to help guide developers through all aspects of approvals required for their projects.

Partnership Approvals is primarily focussed on the central city to support development there but significant projects outside that area can also be supported, explains Chief Executive Karleen Edwards.

“While Rebuild Central offers support in the early phases of a development, we are still hearing that people struggle to understand the different departments and agencies they need to deal with for project approvals. Partnership Approvals addresses that.

“It does not guarantee applicants their approvals, rather it builds on what is already available by providing a single point of contact for project approvals from the initial concept stage right through to opening,” Dr Edwards says.

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Customers appreciate personal service



A pilot of the Council's case management Partnership Approvals service run by the Council's commercial consents unit has shown that customers value the personal approach.

Craig Newbury and Miles Yeoman from Canterbury Property Investments say they found the case management process to be smoother with fewer headaches.

"It creates more certainty around timeframes because you're not dealing with as many issues," says Craig Newbury.

"We are able to focus on our core tasks, there is no time-wasting as projects work through compliance.

"One of the keys to this is accessibility. When you have a problem, you know who to go to and they know the steps towards resolving the issue."

The Council's Chief Executive Karleen Edwards says once customers have done 'feasibility work' — this could include seeking advice at Rebuild Central — and developed initial concept designs, a decision can be made on whether the project is suitable for Partnership Approvals.

"Generally this approach is for projects that are high profile, either in terms of the site or the proposed development, have a high dollar value, contribute significantly to the local economy, are highly complex or are by customers with multiple projects."

A case manager can help with:

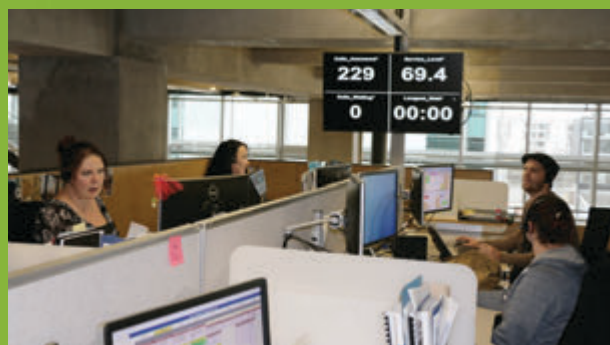
- Land issues (including ECAN approvals) and if the planned activity is allowed in that area
- Access to services such as water, waste water and so on
- The design, including accessibility, fire and other technical aspects
- Licensing and final approvals

Dr Edwards says the benefits will far exceed the small cost of the service.

Helpful tips from the Inspections Scheduling Team



- If you need to change or cancel an inspection, contact us as soon as possible. That means we have the best chance of letting someone else use that booking.
- Remember that any previous failed inspections must be resolved before future bookings can be made.
- Check your list of required inspections and booking all the ones listed as you need them. If you think there is an inspection missing from the list, let us know.



The Inspections Scheduling team want to help ensure bookings go smoothly. You can book an inspection by phoning 941-8222 or complete the **online application form**.

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Low-risk check no longer required for some properties

The Council is no longer doing a pre-stopping inspection on most single unit residential properties. The change does not affect multi-unit residential or commercial properties.

Any residential property that has previously failed a pre-stopping inspection will need to pass a re-inspection.

Not doing the pre-stopping inspection has been identified as posing low risk to a building's structure; the small number of failures are due mainly to documentation issues rather than workmanship.

It is expected that by removing the need for this low-risk inspection type, we will be better able to meet the demands for other inspection types that have a higher risk factor. If

you have already been issued with a consent, we should still call our bookings team on (03) 941-8222 as they will determine if you still need to do the inspection.

Our new residential inspections guidelines are a useful tool for the industry. They spell out the minimum requirements needed to pass for each inspection type. This includes the pre-stopping inspection for those properties that still require one.

You can find the guidelines on the [Council website](#).

New fees from 1 July



Peter Sparrow

New fees for building consents and related services come into force from 1 July 2015.

"Over the past 12 months we have invested in new technologies, equipment and systems to ensure we are processing consents and doing other building control roles efficiently to support the rebuild," explains Building Control and City Rebuild Director Peter Sparrow. "This includes recruiting appropriately skilled staff in critical areas such as inspections.

This investment is reflected in the results we are achieving each month, however, because building control activities are funded through fees, any increased costs associated with this have to be passed on

"While we are providing a better, more reliable service, it means we have to make some adjustments to the way we calculate our fees. Deposits are non-refundable and will no longer include an estimate for averaging processing time and inspections. Separate invoices will be sent for inspections when the consent is issued.

Below is a schedule of basic deposits for 2015/16:

Residential:

Value of work	Deposit
\$0 - \$19,999	\$1,200
\$20,000 - \$100,000	\$1,400
\$100,000 - \$300,000	\$2,000
\$300,000 - \$500,000	\$2,800
More than \$500,000	\$3,800

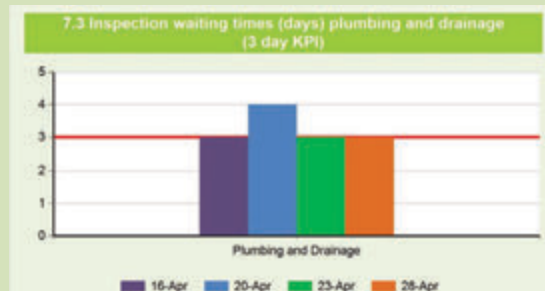
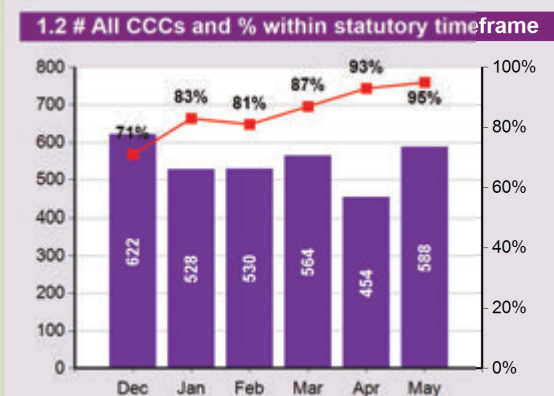
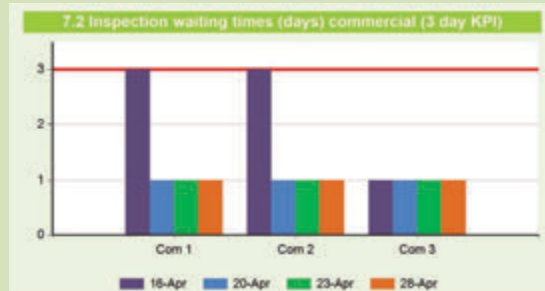
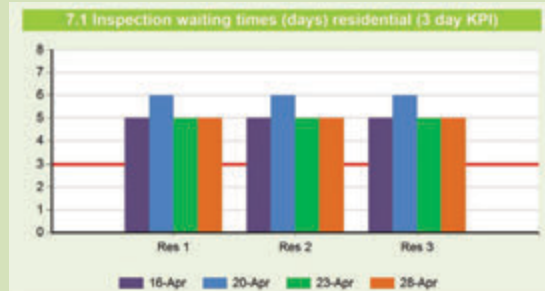
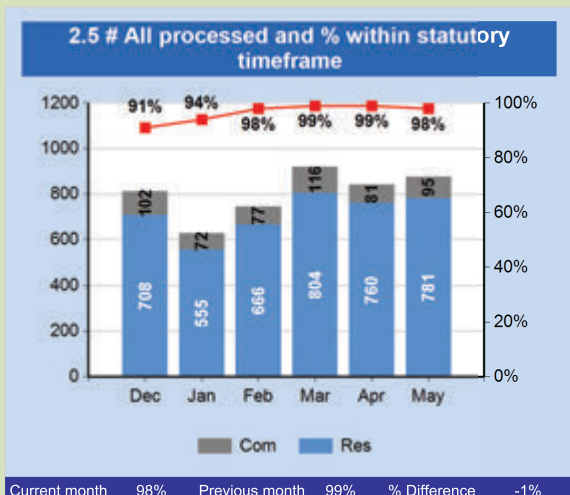
Commercial:

Value of work	Deposit
\$0 - \$19,999	\$1,550
\$20,000 - \$100,000	\$2,670
\$100,000 - \$500,000	\$4,000
\$500,000 - \$1m	\$5,850
More than \$1m	\$7,990

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How your effort is helping us

For the fourth month in a row, at least 98% of consents processed have been done within 20 days.

This is partly because of the new way we are working but also largely because of the effort the industry is making in ensuring applications are of a high standard and appropriate documents are provided. This reduces the likelihood of processing delays caused by our staff having to request information.

May has also seen further improvement in code compliance certificates, with 95 per cent done within 20 days.

Gains made in inspections are holding, with reduced wait times for residential and commercial customers. This is despite soaring demand that led to 5787 inspections completed in May.

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Managing accessibility and meeting the code

With so many new commercial developments planned or underway in Christchurch, Commercial Consents Manager Leonie Rae provides some timely advice about accessibility.

“It’s important for everyone building or renovating to know that the Building Code has some specific requirements about accessibility. It’s many times easier to get this stuff right on paper first and very hard to put right once it’s built.”

Here are some reminders of what’s required:



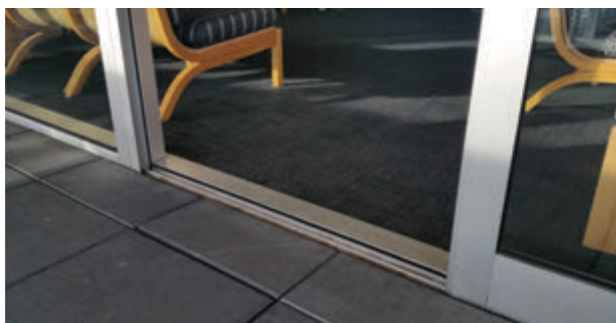
Isolated steps

In a commercial building with a level access route, it is not acceptable to have a single step along the access. This including changes in level at doorways. The change in level must be no greater than 20mm.

You can have a series of steps or a ramp.

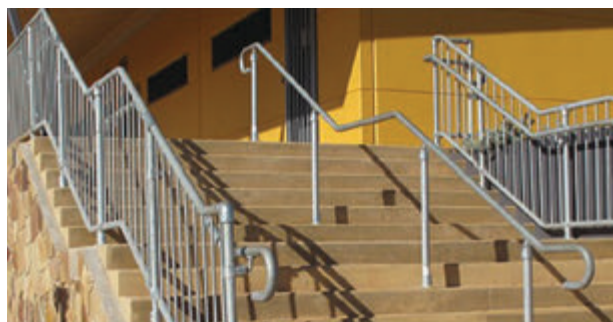
Note:

- Problems can occur when 20mm changes in level are designed into the construction and then exceeded by the placement of joinery through the threshold. Some of these end up being 35 to 50mm high when finished.
- Generally aluminium joinery architectural profiles won’t comply with the code. Architectural profiles are the ones used in housing with the same profile as the jamb continuing through the threshold.
- A clear threshold should be provided and a sill bar can be used but it must be within the 20mm construction height.
- Ensure landings are provided where doors are on slopes greater than 1:50.



Linking internal space to balconies

Again, the 20mm rule applies. It is rarely okay to have a step.



Handrails on staircases

There are strict rules for stairs in commercial buildings:

- Every set of steps must have a handrail, on both sides if it’s accessible.
- Handrails must not project out onto the street or footpath.
- If you are returning the extensions on handrails, make sure there is at least sufficient length beyond the last tread to stop a falling user or it won’t satisfy that performance requirement. Returning handrails immediately at the edge of lowest tread is not acceptable.
- Be aware of the rules for intermediate handrails for wider sets of steps.
- Make sure the handrail profile is acceptable, ie. Watch for things like sharp corners.

Surveyors input

For larger projects and inner city projects, get a surveyor to verify that they were involved in establishing existing site levels and setting finished design levels with the designer.

This is a small cost to get it right on a multi-million dollar build.

- Most site boundaries are not level so we would expect slight changes around the perimeter.
- Find out what is planned for the street. The inner city is a tangle of existing levels that will be altered as part of a bigger project, some will stay the same and some are up and down that will be slightly altered as a repair.

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