



The Design & Consent Process

The process from first meeting to construction involves many decisions.

At TCA Group, we aim to make this process as enjoyable and simple as possible. We will keep you informed along the way, and take care of all the technical things, so you can focus on what's important

This guide outlines the general steps between now and the start of construction.

Please make note of each step detailed in this guide, but also feel free to discuss any part of the process with one of the knowledgeable TCA Team.

PLANNING, SITE SPECIFIC CONSTRAINTS & REQUIREMENTS

PLANNING AND SITE CHECKS	
Time: 1 day on site 2 weeks to collate data generally Fees: - TCA Site Visit Fee - Planners Fee - Council Fees - LINZ Fees <i>(all above are billed directly to owner)</i>	Our initial site visit allows us to gain a broad understanding of your project. If your project involves an existing building, it is also a chance for us to undertake a measure-up so we can create an accurate existing floor plan. We will discuss any site-specific constraints such as District Planning rules or Consent Notices listed on your Certificate of Title. We strive to identify all constraints and ensure that your project complies with them where possible. Depending on the scale of your project we may undertake these checks ourselves, or we may engage our recommended Planner. We will purchase a copy of your Certificate of Title from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) or meet with the Council. Some projects may NOT meet the requirements of your site’s constraints. This may necessitate a <i>change of design</i> or a RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION (see the Resource Consent pathway below).
GROUND TESTING & REPORTING	
Time: 1 day on site 2-8 weeks delay Fees: - Structural or Geotechnical Engineer Fee <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	Most projects require ground testing. It is important to know this upfront as it will impact what we CAN or CANNOT design ourselves. With your approval, we can engage one of our recommended Structural or Geotechnical Engineers. Their testing report will discuss the type of ground and it’s bearing capacity. If the ground is found to be soft, your foundations will need to be designed by an Engineer. Generally, this will be the same Engineer that undertook the testing. If you have a contact that can provide ground testing, we can liaise with them. There may be additional fees involved in liaising with an unknown Engineer.

SURVEYING	
Time: 1 day on site 2-6 weeks delay Fees: - Surveyors Fee <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	Many projects will require a surveyor to confirm site conditions such as boundary locations and topography. If you have purchased a property in a new subdivision, you may already have survey plans which we can work from. Historic survey data or Title Plans may also provide enough information to work from. We will be able to advise whether a surveyor will need to be engaged. We can also organize one of our recommended surveyors to undertake the necessary work. If you have a contact that can provide Surveying Services, we can liaise with them. There may be additional fees involved in liaising with an unknown Surveyor.
Project Brief	
Time: Subject to client timeframes Fees: No fees	A project brief is the foundation for your project. It will include the information you as the client want us to incorporate into your design. We will send you an email with list of information you can provide us which will inform a project brief.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT PHASE

Agreement Letter Signed

SKETCHES & THE DEVELOPED DESIGN PHASE	
Time: 2 weeks – 1 year (varies greatly) Fees: - Deposit & payment schedule as per TCA Agreement Letter	Now that we are done with the initial research we can START. If we haven’t already, we will send you an Architectural Agreement letter. This letter outlines our understanding of the scope of works, our general services & expectations, timeframe & estimated cost. A deposit invoice will be sent out to you as per the Agreement letter. A meeting will then be booked to discuss your project brief and the site constraints. After our discussions we will create Concept Plans for your review. Generally, we will send these to you via email, or if you prefer we can provide a set of hard copies. We can meet to discuss the Concept Plans, or liaise via phone and email. After hearing your review we will make various changes. This process repeats until we reach a final design which you are happy with. We understand there may be multiple revisions during the Design Development Phase, and it is the time to make ANY and ALL changes (within the limits set out in the engagement letter). If you find it difficult to visualise plans, please let us know. We may be able to sit with you at our computers and run you through a 3D model.

RESOURCE CONSENT if required	
<i>(check with us if fee incl. Resource Consent)</i> Time: 1-6 months for TCA work 5-6 weeks at council generally Fees: - Payment as per TCA Engagement Letter - Consultant Planner - Council Deposit <i>Fees (billed directly to owner) Council may charge additional processing fees (billed directly to owner)</i>	If we have concluded that your project does NOT meet the requirements of your Council’s District Plan or site constraints, a RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION is required. In most circumstances we can provide all the required documentation for the RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION. We work with an experienced Planner and can provide an Assessment of Environmental Effects report (AEE) when required. A RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION is completed before and separately to a BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION. The Resource Consent process often requires the house to be designed first and can add to the project timeline while we wait for it to be approved by the Council. The Resource Consent Process is similar to the Building Consent process, which is discussed in detail further on. Let us know if you have a Planner you’d like to work with as we can liaise with them. There may be additional fees involved in liaising with an unknown Planner.
DETAILED DRAWINGS	
Time: 1 week – 1 year varies greatly. Fees: - Payment as per TCA Engagement Letter	Detailed Drawings (or Working Drawings) are the plans we prepare and submit to the Council as part of the BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION. They are also the plans your builder/contractor will eventually work off once issued by the Council. These drawings include items such as plans, elevations, sections and various scale details. They demonstrate how the building is to be put together. They are to be read in conjunction with any consultant’s drawings, specifications and supporting documentation. While consultants such as engineers are doing their work, we may continue detailing the working drawings. Sometimes a consultant’s work is essential before our detailing can continue, in which case our part of the project will be placed on hold. Once all consultant work is received, we can finalize our detailed drawings ready for Building Consent application. At this stage we will send the next invoice as per our Agreement letter.

SPECIFICATIONS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	
Time: 1 – 2 weeks Fees: - None generally	Specifications and Supporting Documents will be collated by us as part of a Building Consent application. Specified items of your project such as the foundation/flooring system, structural connectors, cladding systems, lining systems, plumbing, insulation, heating systems, paint or stain products and many more will be included in the Specifications document. Different councils require information be collated in different ways. Supporting Documentation includes items such as ground reports, engineer design, Prenail design, our own structural calculations, flooding data, insulation calculations, bracing calculations and more.
H1 INSULATION CALCULATIONS	
Time: 1 week generally Fees: - Payment as per TCA Engagement Letter	The new and improved Building Code includes tougher requirements on insulation which can influence more than just the batts you are putting in your walls. Sometimes a special floor system, thicker wall framing, or a deeper roof structure may be required to achieve adequate thermal performance. Later in the design development phase, we will complete an insulation design on your project. The calculation will let us know what will be required for the design as proposed, or if any changes need to be made before we progress to the next phase of work.

CONSULTANTS

PRENAIL	
Time: 2 - 8 weeks generally Fees: - Prenail Fee <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	In many cases projects require Prenail design for the roof trusses. A Prenail (pre-nailer) fabricates your wall frames and roof trusses in their factory and delivers them to site – speeding up the construction process. We will send the relevant plans to a preferred Prenail once we have detailed them to a suitable level. The Prenail will provide us with a simple truss layout drawing and Producer Statement, which lets the council know your project can be framed suitably. The Prenail will often charge a small fee or in some cases require a works contract to be signed before their documents required by council are issued. We will organize all Prenail work for you.
ENGINEERING	
Time: 2-20 weeks - varies greatly Fees: - Engineers Fee <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	Your project may require engineering design. As with Prenail design, we will only send your plans to an engineer once we have developed and detailed the plans to a suitable level. We endeavour to minimize engineering requirements of your project, and where possible utilize our own design software and calculations. However, sometimes engineering design is the most logical or only solution. We can organize this to be undertaken by one of our regular engineers. If you have an Engineering contact, we can liaise with them. There may be additional fees involved in liaising with an unknown Engineer.
OTHER CONSULTANTS	
Time: - TBA by consultants Fees: - TBA by consultants <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	Sometimes a project may require other consultants to be approached for design. Such consultants may be wastewater treatment engineers; hydraulic engineers; fire & acoustic designers, or specialty window designers. As above, we will liaise with these consultants on your behalf. If other consultants are likely to be required for your project this will be discussed with you at the earliest opportunity.

COUNCIL CONSENT PHASE

APPLICATION FORMS	
Time: 1 day Fees: - Council Fees <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	The final step in applying for a Building Consent is completing the various application forms and checklists. We fill out all of these on your behalf. Some councils require you to sign some forms as the owner, others will allow us to sign on your behalf - we will advise.
FINAL INVOICE	
Time: - End of Engagement Fees: - Payment as per TCA Engagement Letter	Once we have all information ready for consent application, we will send you our final documentation along with your final invoice. This is to be paid before we submit your Consent to Council. If you dispute any invoice, we are happy to discuss but we will not submit to council or distribute the rest of the application package to you or your builder/contractors until it is paid.
CONSENT APPLICATION	
Time: 20 working days with Council + Admin time - Allow 5-6 weeks generally. <i>(See below for RFI delays)</i> Fees: - Council Fees <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	We will apply for the Consent on your behalf, acting as your agent throughout the process. Upon application the council may invoice for a deposit (payable by you) and vetting begins. Vetting is when the Council checks that our application generally looks OK. If they have any queries, they will contact us. Some councils will invoice after vetting is completed. Once vetting is complete and any Council invoices paid by you, the Council formally accepts your application and then has 20 working-days to process it. Processing goes through various stages and checks via different departments within the Council. The Council Processors are tasked with confirming that the application demonstrates compliance with all relevant aspects of the New Zealand Building Code. If Processors have any queries or would like to clarify anything they will send out requests for information (RFI's) which are discussed below.

RFI'S (REQUEST FOR INFORMATION)	
Time: 1 – 5 days Fees: - TCA charged at 'time / cost' - Council Fees <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	A Request for Information (RFI) is a query from Council Processors that is raised when they require clarification or more detail. When an RFI is sent out the 20 working-day time clock is stopped until it is responded to. As we are human, from time to time we may miss something. Supplying what each individual Processor wants to see is often difficult too. There are many Codes and Standards spread over thousands of pages which our work must comply with. We aim to demonstrate compliance with the most applicable Codes and Standards and ensure the Builders can construct your project, but demonstrating compliance with thousands of pages of documentation isn't practical. Each Processor's understanding and interpretation of the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC) and general construction varies greatly, and legislation dictates that the individual processor must be satisfied the design work complies with every Code and Standard. Sometimes a young or inexperienced processor may ask a lot of questions, whereas an experienced processor may not have asked any, which is an understandable situation. There is increasing pressure from MBIE for council processors to be perfect, which is reflected in the RFI's we are seeing If time responding to RFI's goes beyond a couple of hours, please be advised we will likely charge you for time spent as outlined in our Agreement letter.
ISSUED CONSENT	
Time: - On the day received from Council Fees: - Council may charge additional processing fees <i>(billed directly to owner)</i>	Once the Council Processors are satisfied the proposal complies with the NZBC, Consent will be granted and sent to Council admin staff for issuing. 'Granted' means the application has been processed 'Issued' is when documents are all stamped and ready to be sent The Council may invoice for additional time spent on the job over and above the deposit fees, before they will issue the Consent. We will receive your issued consent documents from the Council and provide you with them.