



RETAINING WALLS & SITE WORKS

What are site works?

Site works are when the natural ground levels of the site are changed by way of fill or excavation.

What is a Retaining Wall?

A retaining wall is a structure that holds a difference in ground levels than would naturally be supported.

What are the deemed-to-comply requirements?

The R Codes – Volume 1 is split into Part B and Part C. The Deemed-to-Comply requirements are different depending on which Part of the R Codes the application is assessed under. The Deemed-to-Comply requirements below are for retaining walls and site works that are behind the street setback, this means that they are not located between the dwelling and the street (e.g. within the front yard).

Part B
The R Codes – Volume 1, Part B allow a retaining wall that is 0.5 metres or less in height (measured from natural ground level) to be located up to the lot boundary.

Retaining walls and site works more than 0.5 metres in height (measured from natural ground level) are required to be setback in accordance with the Table 4 of the R Codes – Volume 1, Part B:

Height of site works and/or retaining walls*	Required minimum setback
0.5m or less	0m
1m	1m
1.5m	1.5m
2m	2m
2.5m	2.5m
3m	3m

The nearest higher value is used to determine the required setback. For example, a 0.6 metres of site fill or retaining would have a minimum setback requirement of 1 metre.

Part C
The R Codes – Volume 1, Part C allows a retaining wall that is 1 metre or less in height (measured from natural ground level) to be located up to the lot boundary.

Retaining walls and site works more than 1 metre in height (measured from natural ground level) are required to be setback in accordance with the Table 3.5a of the R Codes – Volume 1, Part C:

Height of retaining walls and fill*	Required minimum setback
1m or less	0m
1.5m	1.5m
2m	2m
2.5m	2.5m
3+m	3m

For example a retaining wall 1.1 metres high is to be set back 1.5 metres.

* As measured from the natural ground level, as defined in the R Codes.



Notes

- If you are replacing an existing retaining wall that does not meet the deemed-to-comply requirements, you may still require development approval.
- Where a building wall incorporates a retaining wall directly beneath it, the retaining wall is included in the height of the proposed wall. For example a garage wall that is 2.4 metres high, on top of a 1 metre high retaining wall, is measured as 3.4 metres high.
- Measurement is from the natural ground level. This means that behind the street setback, excavation can be located on the lot boundary, as the 'height' would not be more than 0.5/ 1 metres (as applicable).

What about retaining walls and site works in the street setback area?

Under the R Codes – Volume 1, the Deemed-to-Comply standard for, excavation, fill and retaining walls within the street setback is 0.5 metres.

How do I know which version of the R Codes my proposal will be assessed against?

R Codes		Single Houses	Grouped Dwellings	Multiple Dwellings <i>(includes dwelling components of mixed-use developments)</i>
Volume 1	Part B	R40 and below	R25 and below	R10 to R25
	Part C	R50 and above	R30 and above	R30 to R60
Volume 2		N/A	N/A	R80 and above including R-AC

Refer to the City's information sheet for more information on which R Code applies to your property.

Do I need development approval?

For any site work or retaining wall developments located on heritage-protected places, a development approval is needed.

For any single houses, grouped dwellings, multiple dwellings (apartments), if the deemed-to-comply requirements of the City's Policy No. 7.1.1 – Built Form, R Codes – Volume 1 are met there is no need for development approval.

In the instance where a development does not comply with the deemed-to-comply standards, development approval is required.

If your property is covered by Volume 2 (apartments) or is Commercial (non-residential), there are no Deemed-to-Comply standards under the R Codes. The City's Local Planning Policy: Planning Exemptions allows retaining walls up to 0.5m in height or less without requiring development approval.

How do you assess a development application for site works and retaining walls?

Where an application does not meet the requirements of the City's Built Form Policy or the R Codes, written justification detailing how the development satisfies the design principles must be submitted with the application. The design principles for site works and retaining walls require for the proposal to consider the impact to adjoining properties and the streetscape. Consideration will also be given to the response of the proposal to the natural topography of the land.

An Urban Planner will consider this departure from the planning framework and whether the application is considered to meet the relevant design principles or local housing objectives.

Where departures are not deemed appropriate or in line with the design principles, amended plans or reconsideration of the proposal will be required.

How long does the development application process take?

The City has 60 days in which to determine the application, or 90 days if the application requires community consultation.



Clause 75(c) of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulation 2015* states that applications may take longer than 90 days where it is agreed to in writing between the local government and the applicant.

How long do I have to build my retaining wall or complete my site works?

Development approvals are valid for 2 years. The construction of the retaining wall has to be substantially commenced within this time period.

What information is required for a Development Application?

Please refer to the relevant Development Application Checklist available on the City's website [here](#).

Do I need building approval?

Applying for development approval and a building permit are two separate processes, both controlled under different legislation. A building permit ensures that the retaining wall is appropriately engineered and constructed in accordance with the relevant building legislation.

A retaining wall on the boundary may still require a building permit, even if it is less than 0.5 metres in height and does not require development approval.

If you would like further information on the Building Permit process and retaining wall requirements please refer to the City's website and the Building retaining wall information guide available [here](#), or contact the City's Building Services team on 9273 6000.

Do you have more questions?

The City is unable to confirm if a proposal will be supported in the absence of a formal development application. However, applicants can discuss planning proposals and preliminary plans with the City's Urban Planners. Urban Planners can provide general advice to applicants on a proposed development or land use and the information required to lodge a complete application.

A Duty Planner is available at the City's Administration Office Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm, in person or on the phone.

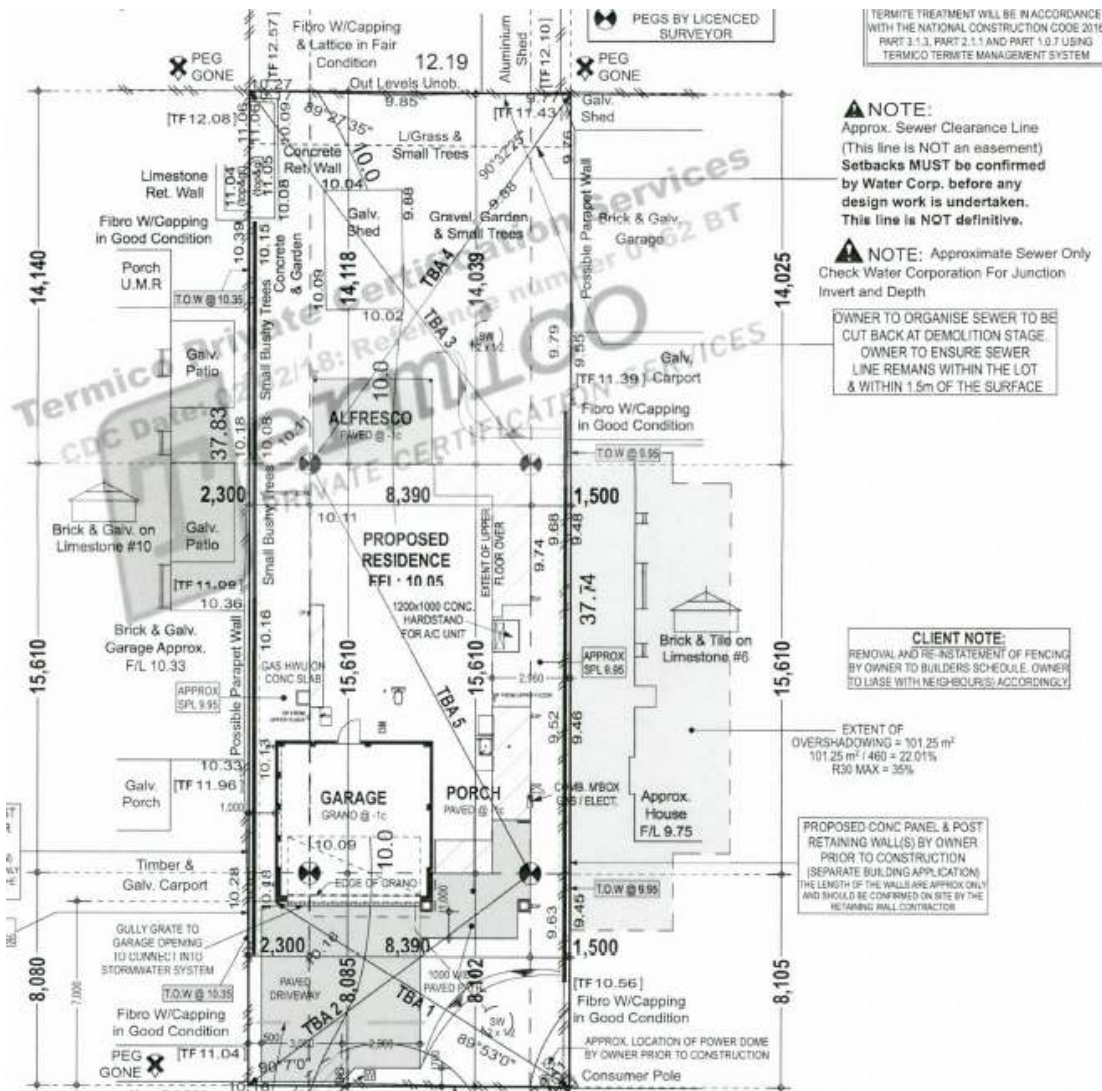
Phone: 9273 6000

Email: mail@vincent.wa.gov.au

Address: Main Administration Building, 244 Vincent Street, Leederville 6007, WA

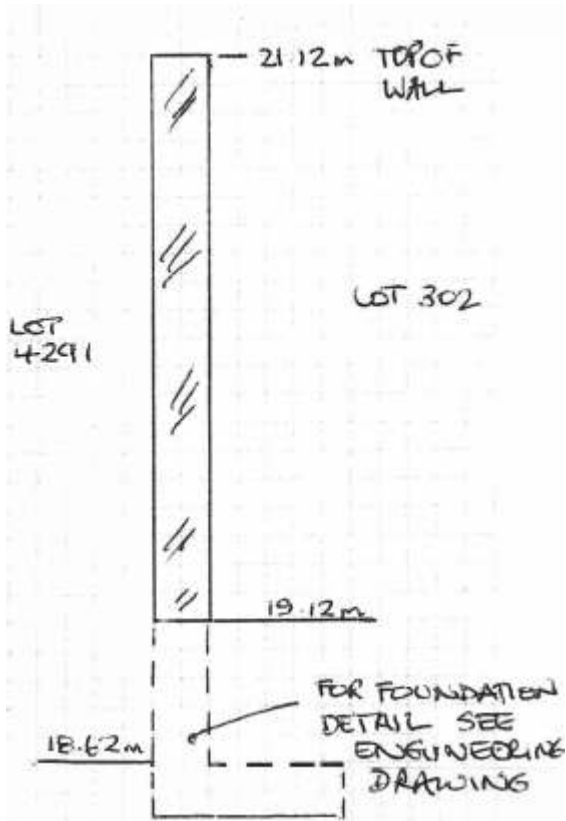


SITE PLAN EXAMPLE:





ELEVATION PLAN EXAMPLE:



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