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To: DPTI:Planning Engagement
Subject: Comments on the Building regulations

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I wish to make the following comments

Boundary construction

I can not stress enough that there has been a serious problem for many years around boundary construction, particularly in class 1 buildings. As a demonstration of difficulty of the issue the Building Advisory Committee had termite treatment of boundary walls on the agenda for at least 5 years probably more and NO resolution was ever achieved.

Now that the Act allows interconnection for weatherproofing, damp proofing and vermin proofing , including termites , it is TIME that the regulations make it a requirement that the documentation for a development shows what is on the neighbouring property AND details how the development achieves the weather proofing, damp proofing and vermin , including termite , proofing. Indeed the detailing may be easier where there are 2 abutting walls BUT there must be a process so that all know what has to happen. as intrusive work will often be needed on the other property.

Stormwater

Stormwater management has become a major issue, particularly associated with brown fields development. At the moment it is a planning approval issue BUT it is actually a council engineering issue. It often requires a large amount of detailed work before an applicant can get a planning consent. For residential work in particular it is unreasonable. Stormwater should be handled separately after the planning consent is in place, and approved by the council engineering department. I do not see why the regulations can not allow the option of a 3 stage process so that this matter can be handled between the engineers who understand the technical issues. At the same time some consistency between councils should be required through some guidelines being issued.

Planning documentation.

Probably as a result of some clever marketing by some developers a few decades ago the public has been convinced that MICRO planning is needed to protect the value of property.. In class 1 buildings this has resulted in the documentation for planning being at a level that the house could be built. It is my opinion that the plans for planning consent for class 1 and 10 buildings and additions need only show a line elevation and an outline of the building on the site. At the moment the planners are determining the external colour schemes, types of roofs, types of windows and requires an internal layout. My question is why? Surely these are the domain of the owner and designer and with perhaps the exception of heritage areas, have no real impact on the planning or the people. I assure you a barking dog is a far bigger problem than a GI fence!

The current planning requirements is also causing issues for people who want to change the type of windows or a brick is unavailable as the substitution means they are in breach of a planning approval. The government in starting the process stated it was trying to simplify BUT all the old detail is still there.

As a final general comment it is time that the building rules and building surveyors were given their correct standing. If a building does not quite fit a set of planning requirements does it really matter BUT if the building rules are not complied with people are likely to die. As an engineer who has worked closely with building legislation over a long period of time I have watched the department try to get rid of the building advisory and policy areas at least 4 times and local government has put so many layers over their building

surveyors they have become constrained to the point where they have difficulty doing their work. These regulations should be used to ensure the building requirements are given their correct status. As an example the issue with a poorly selected building cladding (building issue) that burnt rapidly has created such an impact that apart from all the political committee hearings legislation changes etc my PI insurance now has a clause about building external cladding approval and selection! (Ironically no one was hurt in the docklands fire)

Thanks for the opportunity to make comment.

Ron

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